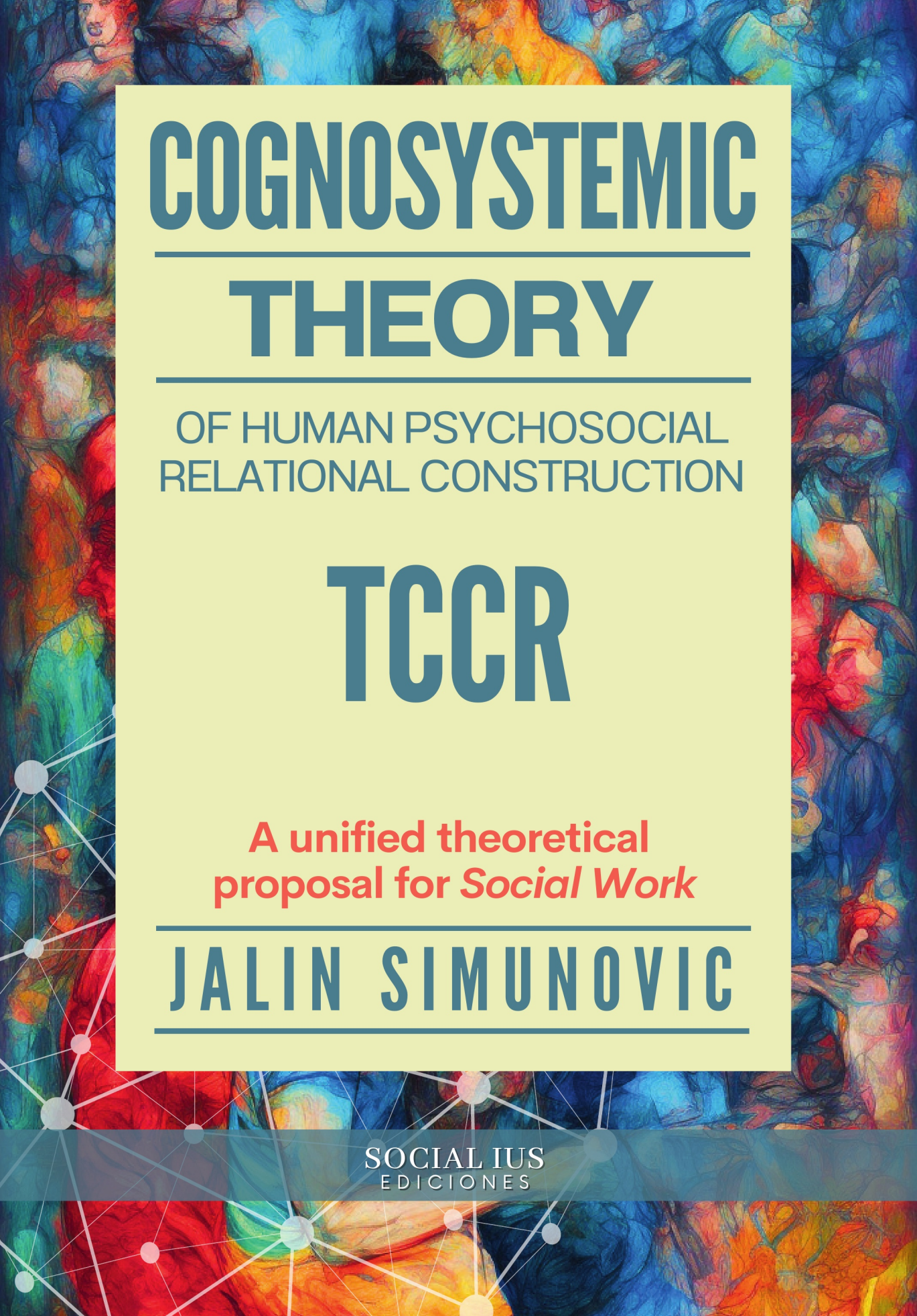

COGNOSYSTEMIC THEORY

OF HUMAN PSYCHOSOCIAL RELATIONAL CONSTRUCTION

TCCR

A unified theoretical proposal for *Social Work*

JALIN SIMUNOVIC

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Discover a theory that will transform your worldview: the key to understanding and reconstructing the fabric of human relationships

The *Cognosystemic Theory of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction* (TCCR) is an original theoretical proposal conceived within the field of Social Work, aiming to address the need for an autonomous, coherent, and systematic disciplinary framework. Integrating philosophical, psychosocial, narrative, and systemic approaches, this work analyzes how intersubjective systems of meaning shape human experience and psychosocial reality.

The author introduces concepts such as the "Cognosistema," the "cognosystemic layers," and the "cognosystemic meme" as analytical axes for understanding the narrative processes that structure social life, enabling contextually grounded and theoretically robust interventions.

This book stands as a significant contribution for researchers, professionals, and students interested in strengthening Social Work as a true science of human relationality. With precise language and a solid epistemological foundation, the TCCR offers an innovative theoretical tool for addressing the complexity of contemporary psychosocial phenomena.

Jalin E. Simunovic Menares

Graduate in Social Work and Master's in Family Law and Family Intervention. He has specialized in systemic intervention and has extensive experience in the field of psychosocial intervention and various other professional areas. Additionally, he has been a lecturer at several higher education institutions in Chile.

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A unified theoretical proposal for *Social Work*

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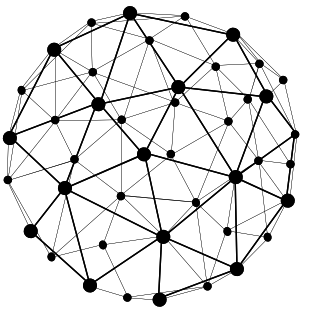

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Author's Dedication

This book is dedicated
to all social workers around the world,
who, through their dedication, knowledge, and
commitment, weave each day the threads of a profession
that not only supports but also transforms lives.

I hope this work becomes a true contribution
to the construction of a Social Work
that, in the near future, establishes itself
as the leading social science
for human development
and fulfillment.

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PREFACE

SINCE I CAN REMEMBER, reading and critical reflection have been much more than mere interests in my life; they have been the driving force and the compass that have guided my intellectual journey. This passion, which over time became an undeniable vocation, found its formal path in 2006 when I began my undergraduate studies in Social Work. Since then, my curiosity has only expanded, leading me to explore the most complex and fascinating corners of this discipline within the social sciences.

Throughout my journey, I have found inspiration in various schools of thought, weaving a network of influences that have enriched my worldview. Philosophy has been a fundamental pillar in this path, guiding me through the ideas of thinkers such as Husserl, Heidegger, Gramsci, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Schütz, and Bertalanffy. I have also discovered an invaluable wealth of ideas in lesser-known but equally influential authors, such as von Glasersfeld, Derrida, Gadamer, Maturana, von Foerster, and Dawkins.

Similarly, sociology has left an indelible mark on my academic formation. The contributions of Durkheim, Merton, Mead, Luckmann, Berger, Parsons, Luhmann, Foucault, Giddens, and Sztompka have enriched my understanding of social structures and the processes that shape our reality. Each of these thinkers, with their diverse perspectives and approaches, has been a key piece in the construction of my theoretical framework and in the pursuit of answers to the questions that have driven my academic and professional development.

Psychology, as a sister discipline to Social Work, has also been a fundamental component of my academic formation, providing key conceptual tools for my theoretical reflections. Throughout this intellectual journey, I must acknowledge the profound influence of authors such as Beck, Ellis, Meichenbaum, Bruner, Guidano, Gonçalves, Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner, and Tharp, whose contributions have been essential to my academic development.

Similarly, Social Work, as the central axis of my academic training and professional practice, has been an indispensable pillar on this journey. The ideas and approaches of prominent figures in the discipline, such as Thompson, Payne, Viscarret, Germain, Gitterman, Parton, Ander-Egg, Dominelli, Adams, Fantova, Howe, White, and Fernández, among many others, have enriched my understanding of the complexity of human relationships and the essential role that Social Work plays in promoting well-being and improving people's quality of life.

Each of these influences has fueled my interest in fundamental questions aimed at understanding the human experience in society. Questions such as:

- What ontological and pragmatic principles underpin our need to coexist in community?

- Why are the sense of belonging and social cooperation determining factors in the development of our species?

- How does social life influence the construction of the individual, and in turn, how does the individual contribute to the transformation of society?

These and many other questions, far from being mere speculations, have been the driving force behind my intellectual and professional pursuit, guiding my path toward the development of critical thinking deeply committed to social intervention.

However, of all the concepts that have captured my attention, none has resonated as profoundly as "reality." This concept has been a central axis in my reflections, an intellectual challenge that has occupied much of my time and sparked my interest from multiple perspectives. Its complexity lies in the way it is constructed, interpreted, and transformed across different contexts, influenced by historical, social, and cultural factors that shape our perception of the world.

Throughout my professional experience, I have observed that different conceptions of reality, when approached in isolation, prove insufficient. I felt that there were gaps that needed to be bridged, connections that had to be established to unify these disparate perspectives. This realization led me to embark on a deep reflection on the necessity of articulating the multiple dimensions that constitute reality, identifying three fundamental pillars in its construction:

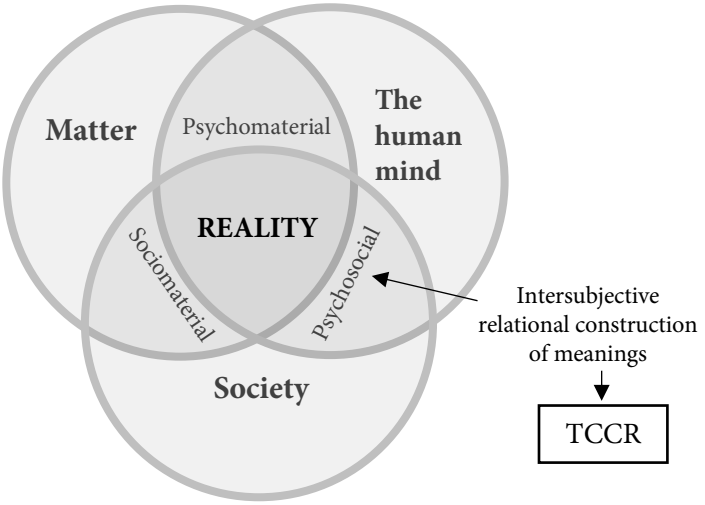
1. **The human mind:** Perceptions, emotions, cognitions, and internal experiences that allow us to assign meaning to the world.

2. **Society:** The intersubjective construction of reality, where our individual narratives intertwine with the collective narratives that emerge from human relationships.

3. **Matter:** The objective physical, chemical, and biological realities that underlie our existence, serving as the tangible substrate for our experiences and symbolic constructions.

These three intrinsically interwoven elements structure our perception and experience of the world, forming what I refer to as a "psychosociomaterial" integral approach. However, my interest and professional commitment have always been aligned with the social sciences, particularly Social Work. For this reason, I chose to focus on what I call the "psychosocial intersection," one of the three key intersections in the interaction of these elements, which became the core of the theorization process of the TCCR.

Psychosociomaterial elements of reality



Now then, why focus exclusively on the *psychosocial dimension* and not explicitly include the material element? The answer lies in the very nature of Social Work as a discipline. While it is undeniable that the material plays a fundamental role in shaping "reality," my goal in developing the *Cognosystemic Theory of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction* (TCCR)—a process that spanned nearly four years of my life—has not been to construct an all-encompassing theory of reality, but rather to develop a unified theory that strategically addresses the specific needs of Social Work and the social sciences.

In this sense, the "psychosocial intersection" focuses on the interaction between the subjective processes of the human mind and the intersubjective constructions that emerge in social life. It is within this intersection that TCCR finds its space for development, exploring how *shared narrative systems* (intersubjective meaning systems) not only reflect psychosocial reality but also transform it, structuring new ways of being and existing in the world.

I chose to center TCCR on this intersection because I believe that it is precisely in this domain where Social Work can offer its greatest theoretical and practical contribution. By focusing on the psychosocial level, this theoretical proposal aims to provide tools for understanding how individuals construct their sense of identity, belonging, and purpose through the narrative systems they share with others. These narratives are fundamental for addressing issues such as social exclusion, family dynamics, and ethnic or gender inequalities, which, although they have material roots, manifest and persist within the realm of

human relationships and shared meanings.

In this sense, TCCR does not seek to encompass all aspects of "reality" but rather to provide a specialized and strategic theoretical framework for Social Work. I sincerely hope that this book not only facilitates an understanding of the underlying logic behind this theoretical choice but also inspires new reflections on how the social sciences can continue to evolve scientifically through strategic approaches that consciously integrate the most relevant dimensions for their specific objectives.

Ultimately, TCCR is an invitation to rethink Social Work from its own ontology, placing at its core what defines its action: human relationships, shared meanings, and the narratives that construct our social reality.

Arica, March 2, 2025

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INTRODUCTION

THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORICAL EVOLUTION, Social Work has always aspired to develop a holistic understanding of the complexity inherent in human interactions across their social, structural, and subjective dimensions. As a discipline operating at the intersection of the individual and the collective, its fundamental mission has been to optimize human development within the relational fabric of society. However, its epistemological consolidation has been hindered by the absence of its own theoretical frameworks, capable of rigorously and coherently articulating the ontological and methodological principles that underpin it. In this context, the *Cognosystemic Theory of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction* (TCCR) emerges as a unified and integral theoretical proposal aimed at addressing this gap, while also seeking to redefine the disciplinary ontology of Social Work as a social science dedicated to the relational structuring of human beings within society.

The concept that gives this theory its name is neither arbitrary nor accidental; rather, it arises from a deep inquiry into the very essence of Social Work and its object of study. The term "Cognosystemic" denotes the convergence of cognitive—in its broadest and most integrative conceptualization possible—and systemic processes, highlighting the way individuals shape their reality through interconnected narrative structures (understood as matrices of intersubjective human meaning construction) that emerge and evolve within the framework of social interaction. Similarly, the expression "Psychosocial Relational Construction" emphasizes the processual and multidimensional nature of human relationships, as they constitute the structural axis of Social Work. Thus, this theory is not limited to a static exploration of social structures; instead, it places at the core of its analysis the narrative dynamics underlying psychosocial reality. Finally, the term "Human" underscores the fundamentally anthropological nature of TCCR, situating intersubjectivity and the construction of meanings as the core of human social existence.

To clarify the inextricable link between Social Work and TCCR, it is pertinent to conduct a brief etymological examination of the fundamental term that largely defines the disciplinary field: the word "social." This etymological analysis allows us to trace its deepest roots and understand its relevance in the theoretical construction of the discipline.

For example, in Spanish, the term "socio" ["partner" in its English version][1] (from which the adjective Spanish "social" is derived) comes from the Latin *socius*, which refers to the idea of a "companion," "ally," or "associate." In turn, *socius* originates from the Latin verb *sequor* (to follow), suggesting the notion of accompaniment and belonging within a collaborative relationship. In Roman law, *socius* was used to designate individuals who were part of a society or common pact, emphasizing an essentially relational dimension of the concept.

Along the same lines, the word in Spanish "Sociedad" ["society" in its English version] comes from the Latin *societas*, a noun derived from *socius*, which referred to an "association" or "alliance" between individuals with a shared purpose. In Roman tradition, *societas* was used in legal and political contexts to designate organized groups of people, later evolving into the modern concept of society ["sociedad" in Spanish] as a structured set of human relationships.

Finally, the adjective in Spanish "social" ["social" in English as well] comes from the Latin *socialis*, meaning "related to association or companionship." It is formed from *socius* and the suffix *-alis*, indicating belonging or relation. In its original usage, *socialis* referred to everything concerning life in community, human relationships, and the norms that govern these interactions. Consequently, from an etymological perspective, this concept is inextricably linked to human interactions, which shape the communal fabric, normative order, and shared meaning systems.

In line with the preceding discussion, the concept of "human relationality" is thus founded on these primitive etymological notions of "the social" [or "lo social" in Spanish] encompassing both voluntary association and spontaneous and structured interactions within a human interactive system. From the perspective of the cognosystemic approach proposed in this work, it can be argued that social interactions and shared meanings within a society shape how individuals perceive and manage their relationships, thereby constructing intersubjective realities that provide meaning and functionality to everyday life. These dynamics influence not only the construction of individual and collective meanings and identities but also the configuration of macrosocial power structures.

Ultimately, this brief philological analysis seeks to emphasize that Social Work should not be conceived solely as a technical or instrumental discipline; rather, its ontological essence lies in the configuration, mediation, and transformation of the relational frameworks that constitute psychosocial reality. In this sense, intersubjectivity emerges as the foundation upon which identities, belief systems, and the symbolic structuring of the world are built. Thus, Social Work should be established as the social science of *human relationality*, committed to the re-signification of the narratives that organize life in society. From this perspective, TCCR represents the theoretical crystallization of this approach, providing a conceptual framework that enables the systematization, analysis, and intervention in the narrative processes that shape human experience.

[1] This linguistic analysis was conducted based on the original Spanish version of this book and was translated with the aim of preserving its message in its entirety.

Throughout the chapters that make up this work, a thorough examination is developed regarding the need for a proprietary theorization in Social Work, addressing the inherent limitations of its interventionist dependence on exogenous and disintegrated analytical frameworks derived from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and other social sciences. It is argued that this subordination has fragmented the epistemological identity of the discipline, preventing the consolidation of a coherent and autonomous theoretical architecture.

In response to this issue, TCCR articulates a body of principles and theoretical postulates that unify and innovatively integrate contributions from well-established philosophical and sociological approaches in the social sciences, such as social phenomenology, hermeneutics, and social constructionism; as well as transversal theories, including systems theory and the ecological theory of human development; and the fundamental principles of Social Work itself. All of this is aimed at structuring a conceptual foundation that does justice to the specificity of the discipline and ultimately seeks to position it—or at the very least contribute to the beginning of this process—as a truly autonomous social science.

Within this framework, the concept of "Cognosystem" is introduced as the fundamental analytical unit of TCCR. Through this model, the structure, dynamics, and evolution of narrative systems that organize psychosocial reality are examined. It is argued that the construction of meanings within this intersubjective suprasystem is a dynamic process involving both the consolidation of dominant narratives and the emergence of alternative narratives that challenge and reconfigure the established symbolic hierarchy in society. This approach provides an understanding of the interrelation between the micro, meso, and macro levels of social reality, establishing an analytical framework that spans from individual experiences to the sociocultural discourses that structure collective life.

The theory also introduces the category of "cognosystemic narrative," defined as a particular type of human meaning system through which individuals organize their perception of the world based on semantic constructions that emerge from social interaction. It examines narrative change processes, the frictions between narrative layers, and the hierarchical shifts within the Cognosystem, providing a theoretical model that explains the transformation of hegemonic narratives and the reconfiguration of belief systems. Throughout this analysis, special emphasis is placed on the function of narrative stability as a mechanism of identity cohesion, as well as on the factors that trigger the disruption and restructuring of dominant narratives.

Another key element of TCCR is the formulation of the concept of "cognosystemic memes," understood as the vehicles of meaning through which narratives are transmitted, modified, and perpetuated across the different levels of the Cognosystem. This approach, inspired by Dawkins' memetic theory, allows for the conceptualization of cultural evolution and influence from a cognitive-systemic perspective, highlighting the role of memes in the propagation and transformation of discursive structures. It is argued that Social Work intervention can greatly benefit from a rigorous analysis of these mechanisms, enabling the identification of crystallized narratives that perpetuate inequality and the development of strategies that foster the emergence of alternative narratives with emancipatory potential.

In summary, the *Cognosystemic Theory of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction* (TCCR) aims to be a substantial contribution to the epistemological consolidation of Social Work, providing it with a proprietary theoretical structure that allows it to transcend its previous conceptual limitations. This work invites the reader to engage in a deep

and systematic analysis of this proposal, offering methodological tools for its application in research, diagnosis, and intervention in the field of human relationships. With this, TCCR seeks to establish itself not only as a conceptual platform of high academic rigor but also as a transformative paradigm that enables the reconceptualization of Social Work praxis from a relational, narrative, and systemic perspective.

1. PROBLEMATIZATION AND STATE OF THE ART

THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, Social Work has consistently demonstrated a deep concern for understanding and addressing the complexities of the psychosocial world in which it operates. However, amid its evolution, one of the most pressing challenges it has encountered is the lack of its own theories and models capable of deeply and specifically explaining psychosocial phenomena from within the core of its own discipline. This absence calls for a reflection on the necessity of developing a theoretical framework that originates from Social Work itself, allowing it to speak with its own voice about the challenges it faces in its daily intervention practice.

Unlike sister disciplines such as psychology or sociology, which have developed robust and internationally recognized theoretical frameworks, Social Work has largely relied on the adaptation and application of exogenous theories to guide its practice and support its interventions. However, to date, it has not yet developed a unifying theoretical body that integrates these models and provides them with a specific coherence useful for its disciplinary perspective and purpose.

This theoretical dependence presents several fundamental problems. First, by adopting theories developed in other fields, Social Work risks decontextualizing and oversimplifying the very phenomena it seeks to address. Psychological, sociological, or philosophical theories, while valuable and useful, were designed to respond to specific issues within their respective disciplines and do not always capture the complexity of the social reality in which social workers operate. This has led to theoretical fragmentation within the field, where multiple approaches and models coexist without a coherent integration, making it difficult to establish a unified and distinctive body of knowledge for Social Work.

For example, a study conducted in Seville, Spain (2009) sought to examine the historical connection between theory and practice in Social Work and how these elements interact in the daily professional practice. The research covered a period from September 2006 to June 2007 and was conducted in three phases: preparation, fieldwork, and data analysis. The study used a validated questionnaire and structured interviews to collect data from 83 active social workers, 90% of whom were women. The findings of this research, published in the journal *Cuadernos de Trabajo Social* of Pablo de Olavide University, Seville, yielded the following results (Barrera et al., 2009):

- More than 75% of the professionals studied used multiple intervention models eclectically, adapting to the specific contexts of their practice but without a clear unifying thread connecting these models (Barrera et al., 2009).

- On the other hand, the most commonly used models, according to the study, primarily included individualistic models, such as the crisis intervention model, case or diagnostic model, problem-solving model, and also the systemic model. Meanwhile, the least used models included the ecological model, cognitive model, and functionalist model (Barrera et al., 2009).

The study confirms one of the initial hypotheses: social workers tend to use a mixed approach in their daily practice, combining different intervention models ("hybridization of models") based on the specific needs of their professional context. However, the authors also highlight an important critique of disciplinary practice, pointing out that it is often centered on a scientificist professional practice, which in many cases constitutes an illusory and utopian belief among professionals themselves:

> Social Work practice must be supported by a broad system of scientific concepts that sustain the day-to-day of intervention; this turns out to be a challenge in our profession and a utopia in many places and institutions where Social Work is developed and where its professionals practice—a utopia that must be demystified, as Matus states: "[...] it is not about overcoming past visions, but about criticizing them while recapturing their meaning." But interestingly, in the analysis and conclusions we present, today's social worker enjoys preserving traditional forms of intervention… These elements remind us of the initial hypotheses (Barrera et al., 2009, p. 160).

The initial hypotheses of this study were as follows:

- "The way in which Social Work develops its practice is closely linked to the theoretical influences it receives from other disciplines." (Barrera et al., 2009, p. 151).

- "The way in which Social Work develops its practice is closely linked to the discipline's claims to scientific legitimacy." (Barrera et al., 2009, p. 151).

- "In Social Work, a single intervention model is not typically used; instead, a blending of models occurs, making use of the hybridization of models." (Barrera et al., 2009, p. 152).

In this regard, the authors of the study reflect on the relationship between theory and practice in Social Work, emphasizing how the profession has adopted and adapted theories and models from other disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. Their analysis underscores the importance of equipping the profession with its own scientific rigor, coherence, and consistency—a concern that has been present since the field's pioneers but has yet to be fully realized. The study highlights that social workers use intervention models that not only guide their practice but are also grounded in specific theories, reinforcing the symbiosis between theory and practice, which is essential given the interventionist nature of the discipline (Barrera et al., 2009). Additionally, the authors seem to imply, albeit implicitly in their conclusions, that Social Work intervention primarily responds to social welfare contexts, legal frameworks, and political guidelines within its immediate environment, rather than contributing to the construction of new scientific theory.

This lack of a proprietary theoretical framework—which, for any Social Work professional, is an evident reality in practice—has contributed to a certain invisibility and underestimation of the discipline's specificity as a social science. Without a disciplinary theoretical framework that clearly and precisely articulates psychosocial phenomena from a perspective centered on Social Work's own intervention approach, the profession risks being perceived as an applied and technical discipline rather than as a field of knowledge with a solid and distinct theoretical foundation. This not only affects the professional identity of social workers but also limits their ability to generate innovative and relevant knowledge for intervention in complex social contexts.

As Díaz (2006) highlights, there is a pressing need for specificity in Social Work today, as without it, the professional identity of the field will gradually erode. The author states:

> It is undeniable that the existence of general or generalizing approaches and perspectives within the Social Work profession has left deep marks, leading to a form of education where everything fits, yet without delivering the expected results. This has permeated the professional system with a kind of 'todology' that, despite the curricular changes promoted by Training Units, has not been overcome. I must candidly confess that I remain convinced of the necessary specificity of Social Work, despite the approaches that claim that social matters are addressed by the social sciences and that the new order has brought the loss of disciplinary bound-

> aries, assuming that it is no longer necessary to concern oneself with specificity but rather to embrace the generality of the sciences—contributing to them and drawing from them through the study of concrete objects of research and intervention. From my perspective, specificity contributes to and facilitates this approach, allowing us to address the complexity and diversity of particular objects from transdisciplinary perspectives (Díaz, 2006, pp. 218-219).

The author asserts that Social Work should be seen as a discipline in construction, one that both nourishes and is nourished by other social sciences, yet must also maintain its own specificities and methodologies. In this sense, the author also emphasizes the importance of rethinking the profession in the face of the challenges posed by neoliberalism and globalization, seeking legitimacy and strengthening its role within social policy frameworks. Additionally, highlights a current trend in which Social Work is perceived as a subsidiary or auxiliary discipline to other professions, stressing that its specificity could allow it to contribute to the resolution of social problems from a unique perspective. This serves as a pressing call for the re-signification of Social Work theory and practice, which implies recognizing its value and specificity within the context of the social sciences (Díaz, 2006).

In line with this discussion, a study conducted in New York City in 2020 involving 20 licensed social workers practicing in the city revealed that the majority of the professionals interviewed regularly used individualistic theories in their practice, particularly those focused on problem-solving approaches, such as psychodynamic, cognitive, and behavioral theories. According to the study's authors, these theories are primarily designed to address individual deficits and personal responsibility, focusing on clients' most immediate and short-term problems rather than on the underlying structural causes (Teater & Hannan, 2021).

Only one of the social workers interviewed in the study reported using theories aimed at empowerment and broader social change. This professional structured her interventions around promoting self-awareness and empowering individuals to confront and challenge the oppressive structures affecting their lives. Additionally, two other social workers had, on some occasions, applied theories with an explicit purpose of social change, focusing on structural transformation and social justice, adopting anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches. However, these applications were occasional rather than a regular part of their professional intervention methods (Teater & Hannan, 2021).

The authors of the study concluded that these findings reflect a dissonance between the global definition of Social Work, which promotes social change and social justice as key objectives, and the actual practice of social workers in their interventions.This dissonance suggests that, in daily practice, many social interventions tend to reflect an individualistic approach, relegating theories oriented toward broader structural and social change to a secondary role (Teater & Hannan, 2021).

As can be observed, Social Work today faces a crucial challenge: returning to its roots and re-centering itself on its fundamental objectives of structural change and social

justice. Over the years, the discipline has tended to focus on approaches that primarily address individual problems, particularly in clinical settings, which have become increasingly popular among professionals. This has led to a proliferation of theoretical models that, while valuable for addressing specific situations, often overlook the systemic dynamics that perpetuate inequality and social injustice at the *meso* and *macro* levels. There is, therefore, an urgent need to develop and apply theories that not only address the individual aspects of suffering and need but also simultaneously and comprehensively tackle the underlying social structures and systems that sustain these issues.

By refocusing on these broader aspects, Social Work can more effectively fulfill its mission of transforming society and promoting a more just and equitable world. In other words, it requires a reorientation toward a more ecosystemic theoretical approach in understanding and addressing reality and the psychosocial challenges of humanity.

In another important study, English researcher Stephen Hicks conducted an extensive conceptual review on the issue of the production and use of "theory" in Social Work, titled *Theory and Social Work: A conceptual review of the literature* (2016). This study examined academic production between 1968 and 2016, analyzing 93 key studies to explore the relationship between theory and practice in the discipline, revealing an ongoing debate about its epistemological, methodological, and applied functions.

The author identifies a deep heterogeneity in the conceptualization of theory within Social Work. While some approaches define theory as an explanatory body of knowledge, others view it as a heuristic framework oriented toward intervention. This plurality has resulted in a fragmented field of debate, lacking a metatheory that could articulate its diverse epistemological and political dimensions. Hicks argues that the absence of an integrative framework hinders the advancement of the discipline by perpetuating ambiguities in the relationship between theoretical knowledge and professional praxis (Hicks, 2016).

One of the most significant findings of the study is the scarcity of empirical research on the concrete use of theory in professional practice. While numerous studies examine the relationship between theory and practice, few investigate how social workers incorporate and generate theoretical knowledge in their daily work. The author highlights that this research gap limits the understanding of knowledge construction and application processes in practical contexts, which, in turn, restricts the possibility of establishing a fluid dialogue between academia and professional practice (Hicks, 2016).

The analysis also reveals the existence of an explicit rejection of theory in certain sectors of Social Work. Some perspectives consider theory detached from the operational reality of the profession, perceiving it as overly abstract or elitist. As a result, theory has been marginalized in favor of more pragmatic approaches. However, Hicks argues that this exclusion is paradoxical, given that all social intervention is based on theoretical premises, even when these are not explicitly formalized. The conscious omission of theory, the author contends, creates a conceptual void that hinders the development of critical thinking within the profesión (Hicks, 2016).

Another key issue identified in the review is the persistent "theory-practice gap", a dichotomy widely documented in the literature and frequently cited as a recurring obstacle in the application of theoretical knowledge in social work practice. Hicks suggests that this division largely stems from a reductionist view that conceptualizes theory as a normative

tool, rather than recognizing it as a dynamic process of knowledge generation and transformation within specific contexts. In this regard, the author advocates for a paradigm shift, promoting a vision of theory that transcends mere instrumental application and moves toward a more contextualized and interrelational understanding (Hicks, 2016).

Finally, the study examines the dominant tendency to evaluate theory based on its immediate applicability. In many cases, theory is expected to provide operational solutions to social problems, leading to a utilitarian approach that minimizes its critical and reflective potential. Hicks warns that this perspective restricts the ability of theory to challenge the underlying assumptions of professional practice and to generate new forms of social intervention. To counter this, the author proposes the construction of a metatheory that not only analyzes the development and use of theory in Social Work but also fosters a more integrative and dialogical approach regarding its role in the discipline (Hicks, 2016).

This conceptual review provides a critical analysis of the inherent tensions in Social Work theorization, highlighting its ambiguities, challenges, and opportunities. It underscores the need for greater epistemological reflection on theoretical production within the discipline, as well as the urgent recognition of theory as an essential component of professional practice, rather than an abstract construct disconnected from daily social work interventions.

On the other hand, the absence of an interpretive approach in Social Work also represents a structural deficiency that has hindered the consolidation of an autonomous epistemology for the discipline. As González-Saibene (2021) points out, Social Work has oscillated between exogenous theoretical frameworks without achieving a substantive integration of the interpretive approach into its epistemological and methodological structure. Despite the influence of thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu, the discipline has remained anchored in a hegemonic positivist and functionalist paradigm, which restricts its ability to address subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and the construction of meaning within social intervention processes.

From this perspective, the interpretive tradition, grounded in the contributions of Wilhelm Dilthey and Max Weber, has been systematically marginalized, making it difficult to formulate an epistemology that prioritizes the construction of meaning within social and professional practices (González-Saibene, 2021). This omission largely stems from the predominance of instrumentalist approaches, which have favored empiricist and quantitative methodologies, shaping a diagnostic and treatment paradigm rooted in inductivist logics.

The author poses a fundamental question: Why, in a context where critical thought has been enriched by diverse philosophical currents, has Social Work postponed the incorporation of hermeneutics and understanding as structural pillars of its professional practice? Within this line of analysis, it is argued that interpretation is an essential component for expanding the analytical horizon of the discipline and for enabling a deeper understanding of the intersubjective dynamics that shape social reality (González-Saibene, 2021). The adoption of this perspective would not only enhance the critical capacity of Social Work but would also facilitate the construction of its own theory, reducing its dependence on external paradigms and strengthening its disciplinary identity.

The need for a proprietary theoretical framework

Social Work, as a discipline centered on social intervention, faces the challenge of comprehensively understanding and addressing how psychosocial reality is constructed and operates in human beings. This psychosocial relational construction is a complex process, in which individuals, groups, and communities develop and sustain their perceptions, identities, and relationships through dynamic interactions with their social and cultural environment.

However, although this process is fundamental to Social Work practice, the discipline—as previously mentioned—lacks a proprietary theoretical framework that specifically and profoundly explains its functioning from a unique and coherent perspective. For this reason, the development of a theoretical framework that addresses this need is essential, not only to strengthen the conceptual foundation of the discipline but also to enhance the effectiveness and coherence of interventions at the individual/family, group, and community levels.

Along the same lines, Vílchez et al. (2018) argue that this phenomenon has been a constant throughout the history of the profession. Instead of developing its own theories to support its professional practice, Social Work has primarily relied on the adoption and application of theories from other social sciences. This dependence is identified as a limitation that hinders its consolidation as a disciplinary field with scientific autonomy:

> …Since its founding, Social Work has shown a particular interest in the ethical principles that guide its practice and the epistemological foundations that support it. However, throughout the past century, Social Work was limited to retrieving theories from other disciplines in order to apply them to social intervention.
>
> Under this premise, and for reasons that remain unclear, instead of producing specific theories to develop its professional practice—like other disciplines of its time—Social Work has leaned toward the search for and appropriation of theories from other disciplines to apply them to social intervention. It is noteworthy that, in the absence of specific theories within the field capable of explaining the social reality of its users, Social Work prefers to rely on theories from auxiliary sciences rather than producing its own, unlike other related professions that are constantly reviewing their epistemological foundations (Vílchez et al., 2018, p. 37).

As can be observed, the authors are explicit in identifying this reality as one of the fundamental epistemological deficiencies of Social Work: its constant reliance on external

theories, to the detriment of the construction of an autonomous conceptual framework. While they acknowledge that the discipline has shown a sustained concern for its ethical and epistemological foundations, its evolution has been characterized by the near-total adoption of theoretical models from other sciences, rather than the generation of its own paradigms, as other related disciplines have successfully done. This absence of endogenous theoretical production limits Social Work's ability for self-definition and critical analysis, highlighting the urgent need to consolidate its conceptual structure to more precisely and contextually address the complexity of the social phenomena in which it intervenes.

A theoretical void: A great opportunity for Social Work

From an epistemological and ontological perspective, psychosocial relational construction constitutes a fundamental axis for understanding identity development, the interpretation of reality, and the articulation of interpersonal and community bonds. At its core, this process represents the foundation upon which social organization is built across multiple dimensions. Its manifestation is not limited to the subjective configuration of the individual within their environment; rather, it also structures and reconfigures social, cultural, and political systems, functioning as a dynamic feedback mechanism that influences both individual and collective praxis. Within the framework of Social Work, the centrality of this concept lies in its heuristic potential for the analysis and intervention in socio-structural dynamics, as these impact the production of meanings, the distribution of symbolic and material resources, and ultimately, the pursuit of equity and social justice.

Despite its theoretical and applied significance, the discipline of Social Work faces a structural deficiency in the absence of a proprietary theoretical framework that systematically integrates the construction and operational dynamics of psychosocial relational reality. This epistemological gap creates a scenario of conceptual fragmentation and dependence on exogenous analytical frameworks, limiting the discipline's autonomy and its ability to effectively influence social transformation. However, this deficiency also presents an opportunity for the consolidation of an endogenous theoretical architecture that strengthens disciplinary identity and provides greater coherence and systematization to social intervention. The formulation of a robust conceptual framework would not only enhance methodological consistency in professional practices but also represent a substantive contribution to the field of social sciences, positioning Social Work as a key actor in the critical understanding and reconfiguration of psychosocial dynamics in contemporary society.

Psychosocial relational construction in Social Work

Psychosocial relational construction in Social Work cannot be conceived as an autonomous or atomized phenomenon but rather as a dynamic process deeply embedded within macro- and micro-social structures, power regimes, cultural configurations, and historical temporalities that shape both subjective and collective experience. The individual, far from being an isolated entity in the construction of their reality, is a situated agent

whose identity, self-perception, and social positioning emerge from a complex web of continuous interactions with others and with the normative and institutional systems in which they participate.

These interactions not only shape the symbolic structuring of individual experience but also define the regulatory mechanisms that delineate the contours of agency and an individual's place within the social order. Within this framework, hegemonic discourses, collective narratives, and power structures function as vectors influencing the construction of reality, mediating the ways in which individuals interpret their environment, respond to social contingencies, and develop strategies of resistance or adaptation in the face of the conditions imposed by their sociopolitical and cultural context.

From the perspective of Social Work, the centrality of relational processes implies that professional interventions cannot be reduced to individualistic or behavioral approaches. Instead, they must be grounded in a structural and processual understanding of the relational dynamics underlying social issues. Phenomena such as social exclusion, community disintegration, interpersonal conflicts, and family crises cannot be analyzed or addressed without considering the relational architecture that gives them meaning and continuity.

In this regard, Social Work praxis must be oriented toward the identification and reconfiguration of relational patterns that perpetuate inequality, precarity, and social fragmentation. To achieve this, it is essential to develop an intervention epistemology that integrates a complex and multidimensional analysis of the mechanisms of construction, reproduction, and transformation of psychosocial reality at different scales—ranging from the micropolitics of daily interactions to the macrostructural configurations that shape systems of exclusion and inclusion.

Only through a methodologically rigorous, theoretically grounded, and strategically oriented intervention is it possible to reshape social relationships in a way that promotes collective well-being and strengthens the social fabric at its broadest level.

Limitations of external theoretical frameworks

As previously mentioned, throughout its disciplinary evolution, Social Work has been critically dependent on theoretical constructs from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology to understand psychosocial relational construction. While these frameworks have significantly contributed to the formulation of its praxis, they have proven insufficient in capturing the ontological and methodological specificities inherent to Social Work (Hölscher et al., 2023).

Although there has been a growth over time in the analysis and application of ideas and concepts within the discipline, particularly in the academic sphere, Social Work still lacks a strong and proprietary theoretical foundation. As a result, in some academic contexts within the social sciences, Social Work has been described as a *practice without theory* (Hölscher et al., 2023). This theoretical deficiency has posed a significant obstacle to its establishment as a distinct and specialized science.

Psychology, for example, with its emphasis on intrapsychic processes and individual cognitive and emotional mechanisms, tends to marginalize the relational dimension

and intersubjectivity. Meanwhile, sociology, focused on the elucidation of macrostructures and normative systems, often overlooks the immediacy of human interaction in the construction of social reality. Anthropology, while incorporating a holistic and historical perspective on sociocultural processes, emphasizes comparative analysis and symbolic configurations, which do not always allow for direct transferability to the transformative praxis of Social Work.

From this perspective, Parton, in his work *Social theory, social change and Social Work* (2002), presents a structural critique of Social Work's dependence on these disciplines, highlighting how the uncritical adoption of external theories has led to epistemological subordination, limiting its conceptual autonomy. This fragmented assimilation has perpetuated normative frameworks that reinforce power structures without critically questioning them, thereby restricting the disruptive and transformative potential of Social Work. As a result, the discipline has been structured within a theoretical framework that is largely exogenous, one that does not always align with its specific needs for intervention and analysis.

The absence of an endogenous theoretical framework has therefore resulted in a pragmatic and utilitarian use of foreign conceptual frameworks, where external notions are incorporated based on their instrumental applicability in Social Work practices, rather than through a systematic epistemological integration. This has led to theoretical fragmentation, which hinders the construction of a coherent paradigm, ultimately limiting the discipline's capacity to develop critical and comprehensive responses to complex social issues (Parton, 2002).

In this sense, what fundamentally differentiates Social Work from related disciplines is—in simple terms—its inherently pragmatic nature and its ontologically ecosystemic character. These two defining features of its professional identity necessitate a theoretical framework capable of effectively addressing both aspects.

For instance, while psychology focuses almost exclusively on the subject's internal processes, Social Work also emphasizes the mediation and transformation of the social environment as a fundamental dimension of individual well-being. Similarly, in contrast to sociology, which is primarily concerned with structural analysis and the theorization of social organization systems, Social Work adopts an operational orientation, aiming to directly influence these structures. Moreover, unlike anthropology, which prioritizes the comparative study of cultural phenomena and their symbolic implications, Social Work focuses on the generation of socioculturally contextualized and sustainable change strategies, fostering the empowerment of individuals and communities in concrete situations.

While Social Work has found valuable theoretical contributions in these disciplines, they have not been sufficient to fully address the complexity of relational dynamics that shape its field of intervention. Undoubtedly, the uncritical transposition of these frameworks has led to a disjointed theoretical assemblage, hindering the consolidation of a proprietary paradigm that organically integrates interactions across the micro, meso, and macro-social levels.

In this regard, the formulation of a specific theory for Social Work, grounded in a robust interdisciplinary architecture—such as the theoretical proposal of this work—would be essential in providing the discipline with a solid conceptual framework to guide its praxis systematically and reflectively. This consolidation would help overcome epistemological

fragmentation, strengthen its critical capacity, and enhance its effectiveness in transforming social structures and improving the living conditions of the individuals and communities it serves.

Implications for professional practice

Consequently, the development of a proprietary theoretical framework in Social Work is imperative for the design of intervention models that respond with greater rigor and specificity to the complexity of the sociocultural contexts in which professional practice takes place. The absence of an endogenous theoretical foundation has limited the discipline's ability to articulate intervention strategies that go beyond traditional conceptual frameworks, which, in many cases, suffer from excessive generalization, lack of contextualization, and obsolescence in addressing emerging social issues.

In this regard, the construction of a specific theoretical structure would enable a holistic and nuanced approach to the diverse realities experienced by human communities, fostering a more refined understanding of the intersectional processes that shape exclusion, marginalization, and structural inequalities.

The urgency of developing a proprietary theoretical framework becomes particularly relevant in multicultural environments, where social structures and intersubjective dynamics present configurations that challenge the normative assumptions of classical intervention models. The plurality of community organization forms, divergences in value systems, and the presence of heterogeneous worldviews demand a theoretical adaptability that can only be achieved through an analytical framework conceived from and for Social Work.

The formulation of a paradigm that addresses the construction of psychosocial reality from a situated and relational perspective would provide the discipline with more relevant methodological tools to design culturally competent intervention strategies, aligned with the specific needs of each social group. As a result, this would enhance Social Work's capacity to generate transformative practices that are perceived as legitimate and effective by the communities it serves.

The development of a proprietary theoretical framework would also allow Social Work to move beyond the fragmentary and pragmatic application of external theories, which, as previously noted, often lack epistemological coherence in their integration within the discipline. A conceptual systematization specific to Social Work would enable a deeper critical analysis of the factors that perpetuate inequality and provide a stronger foundation for the design of more effective and sustainable interventions.

Furthermore, it would help solidify Social Work's status as an autonomous scientific discipline, capable of generating specialized knowledge without relying exclusively on theoretical constructs imported from other fields of study.

Within this framework, the construction of a proprietary theoretical body would not only enhance Social Work's ability to respond more precisely to contemporary challenges but also foster critical thinking that enables the reconfiguration of social structures from a transformative perspective. By developing a theoretical model rooted in the specific realities of the communities it serves, Social Work could position itself as a key actor in the

design and implementation of innovative social policies that promote collective well-being—grounded in a scientific foundation that is both reflective and contextually relevant.

Relevance for multidimensional Social Work

Social Work is structured as a psychosocial intervention discipline with a holistic and multidimensional approach, where interactions between individuals, groups, and communities serve as the analytical and operational core for understanding and addressing social issues. Unlike other disciplines that emphasize reductionist analyses, focusing on individual aspects, macro-social structures, or isolated cognitive processes, Social Work acknowledges the systemic interdependence of human relationships and the intersubjective nature of social reality construction. This recognition demands a theoretical approach that not only integrates multiple dimensions of the social phenomenon but also enables a critical reading of the dynamics of exclusion, vulnerability, and structural transformation across various sociocultural contexts.

The construction of a specific theoretical framework for Social Work would not only help overcome the theoretical and conceptual fragmentation that has characterized the discipline since its inception but also strengthen its legitimacy as a scientific discipline with its own field of knowledge within the social sciences. By providing the discipline with a robust and coherent theoretical structure, it would enable the development of more effective multidimensional intervention strategies, tailored to contemporary challenges.

Furthermore, having a proprietary theoretical foundation would facilitate a more equitable dialogue with related disciplines, preventing epistemological subordination and fostering the generation of relevant knowledge through an interdisciplinary approach. In this way, Social Work could solidify its role as a key transformative agent, contributing to the formulation of integrated responses to current social issues.

Relational intervention in case and family work

Intervention in Social Work at the individual case and family level has traditionally been approached from a relational perspective, aiming to understand and transform the interpersonal interactions that shape individual and family problems. Since family structure and functionality play a crucial role in the psycho-emotional and social development of its members, dysfunctional dynamics can have significant repercussions on the well-being of everyone within the system.

Within this context, Social Work professionals require a theoretical-practical framework that enables them to rigorously analyze the interdependencies among communication patterns, power structures, mutual expectations, and dominant narratives, all of which shape the subjective and social experiences of individuals within the family unit.

A relational approach in individual case and family intervention not only optimizes conflict resolution but also strengthens emotional bonds and fosters resilience at var-

ious levels within the family system. This methodology is particularly relevant in crisis scenarios, such as domestic violence, addiction, or parental dysfunction, where relational structures must be reconfigured to ensure safety and psychosocial well-being for all family members.

However, for the intervention to go beyond the immediate resolution of the crisis, it is essential to design strategies that focus on strengthening autonomy and enhancing the adaptive capacity of individuals, aiming to promote sustainable and functional long-term change.

Despite the relevance of the relational approach in professional practice, within this specific dimension of Social Work intervention, the absence of a dedicated theoretical framework may limit professionals' ability to adequately address the complexity of family interactions and the sociocultural variables that shape them.

As a result, there is a pressing need for the development of a robust theoretical framework that systematically integrates the principles of human relational intervention. Such a framework would enable social workers to critically evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies and adapt their methodologies in response to the emerging needs of families. This process, in turn, would contribute to the consolidation of a more reflective professional practice, one that is evidence-based and aligned with the contemporary demands of Social Work.

Relational intervention in group work

Social Work intervention at the group level requires a comprehensive analysis of the interactional dynamics that emerge within these contexts, as well as the factors influencing the formation, maintenance, and transformation of intra-group relationships. Groups can serve as both an essential support network for individual development and a space for the reproduction of structural inequalities and social exclusions.

From this perspective, adopting a relational approach in Social Work praxis is crucial for deconstructing the interaction mechanisms that either promote or hinder group cohesion, collective identity, and individual agency.

In settings such as support groups, therapeutic groups, or community initiatives, interpersonal relationships can significantly influence the effectiveness of social intervention. Factors such as power distribution, role assignment, communication channels, and levels of participation are crucial in shaping an inclusive and functional environment.

A relational approach specific to Social Work enables professionals to address these elements holistically and contextually, providing analytical and methodological tools for facilitating group processes oriented toward equity, inclusion, and collective empowerment. Furthermore, exploring the factors that foster a sense of belonging and strengthen support networks is essential to ensure that social intervention extends beyond immediate outcomes and becomes part of a sustained process of transformation.

Group approaches in Social Work take on particular significance in contexts characterized by cultural, social, and economic diversity among participants. In such cases, it is imperative to design intervention strategies that not only recognize and validate individual differences but also promote intercultural dialogue, fostering equitable and participatory

spaces of interaction.

The implementation of flexible and adaptive methodologies helps minimize the risks of fragmentation and segmentation, reinforcing the construction of an inclusive group identity and encouraging the development of cooperative mechanisms among members.

Therefore, a specific relational theoretical framework for group intervention in Social Work would enable the formulation of strategies that enhance integration and cohesion in diverse environments, preventing the reproduction of exclusionary structures and fostering participatory citizenship.

Additionally, the incorporation of rigorous evaluation tools would allow not only the measurement of group intervention outcomes but also the continuous refinement of intervention design and implementation, optimizing effectiveness and sustainability over time. In this way, Social Work could strengthen its capacity to intervene in highly complex scenarios, promoting the formation of more equitable, democratic, and supportive communities, where cooperation and collective development become guiding principles of social dynamics.

Relational intervention in community work

Finally, community-level intervention in Social Work is aimed at the reconfiguration of power structures and social relationships that shape community life. Communities, understood as spaces for the construction of collective identities and the generation of social capital, operate within a network of complex interactions that can either facilitate or restrict civic participation and equitable access to development opportunities.

In this regard, a relational approach in Social Work is essential for unraveling the mechanisms through which community actors—including individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions—interact, influencing social cohesion, inclusion, and the community's ability to address collective challenges. A community's capacity for agency is intrinsically mediated by structural factors, such as public policy design, resource access, local governance, and internal sociopolitical organization. This underscores the need to design intervention strategies that are comprehensive and sustainable, ensuring that communities can strengthen their resilience and autonomy in the face of social challenges.

Community Social Work seeks to strengthen intra-community ties, enhance participation in decision-making processes, and promote a social fabric rooted in solidarity and distributive justice. However, achieving these objectives requires a deep analysis of power structures, collaboration and conflict dynamics, and interdependence networks that shape the community environment.

Identifying these elements enables the design of intervention strategies that encourage the inclusion of diverse community actors while minimizing the risks of social fragmentation. In this context, it is essential that the methodologies implemented not only address immediate issues but also foster the development of community capacities for the autonomous management of social transformation processes and sustainable development.

From this perspective, Community Social Work goes beyond mere conflict resolution or resource distribution, positioning itself within a transformative intervention framework that fosters democratic participation spaces, reciprocal support networks, and the promotion of a culture grounded in human rights and social equity. This approach requires the integration of intersectional perspectives, considering the relationship between micro-level dynamics (individual and group interactions) and macro-level structures (political, economic, and social systems). By doing so, Social Work interventions gain greater capacity to influence the structural determinants of exclusion and inequality, fostering more sustainable and impactful social change.

The development of a specific relational theoretical framework in Social Work is essential for addressing the challenges associated with social inclusion and community justice. This requires the design of intervention strategies that recognize the historical, cultural, and political specificities of each community, avoiding the reproduction of homogenizing interventionist models that disregard the specificity of local contexts. In this sense, methodological innovation and the adaptability of intervention strategies are key to ensuring their effectiveness in various community settings, enabling a situated and contextualized approach that strengthens participation structures and local governance.

From this perspective, Community Social Work is not only a mediator of conflicts or a facilitator of resources, but also a key actor in transforming structures of inequality and exclusion that persist within the community sphere. The construction of resilient, equitable, and participatory communities largely depends on the ability of Social Work professionals to drive structural change processes that promote cooperation and active participation among various community actors. To achieve this, rigorous theoretical and practical training is required, equipping professionals with tools for the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions aimed not only at addressing immediate needs but also at building sustainable and socially just community structures.

Relational intervention in Clinical Social Work

Clinical Social Work is structured as a specialized field of Social Work intervention, aimed at supporting individuals and families facing complex challenges in the areas of mental health, emotional well-being, and psychosocial functioning. Far from being confined to a traditional approach centered on psychotherapy or individualized intervention, the relational paradigm emerges as a fundamental conceptual and methodological framework for understanding the multidimensional nature of clinical challenges in this context. In this regard, Clinical Social Work acknowledges that symptomatic manifestations and psycho-emotional dysfunctions cannot be addressed in isolation, but must instead be analyzed in relation to the bonding networks, family interactions, and social support systems that shape the individual's environment.

From a relational perspective, clinical intervention not only addresses the individual's subjectivity but also incorporates an ecological view, recognizing the interdependence of the various levels of social interaction that shape their experience of suffering. This approach allows for the transcendence of a reductionist view of psychological distress as

merely an individual issue, instead repositioning it within the network of meanings, relationships, and structures that influence its origin and persistence. Thus, the role of the Clinical Social Work professional is not limited to the application of direct psychotherapeutic strategies but also involves the coordination of mediation processes, the reconfiguration of family dynamics, and the strengthening of community support networks.

Consequently, the adoption of a relational approach in clinical practice enables the formulation of more comprehensive and contextually relevant intervention strategies for Social Work. Rather than operating from a fragmented logic, this approach fosters a holistic perspective that addresses the full range of psychosocial factors affecting the individual's well-being. Thus, Clinical Social Work becomes a discipline that not only responds to individual symptomatology but also promotes transformational processes within relational dynamics and support structures, facilitating more sustainable therapeutic responses tailored to the specific needs of each case.

Understanding relational construction in the psychosocial clinical context

As previously noted, Social Work in the specific field of mental health (clinical area) operates within an inescapably relational epistemological framework, where individual recovery is understood as a process of intersubjective construction within dynamic systems of psychosocial interdependence. In the work *Social Work in mental health: Contexts and theories for practice*, edited by Abraham Francis (2014), it is argued that healing, from this perspective, is neither a unidirectional nor an autonomous phenomenon, but rather a dialogical articulation between individuals, mediated by professional praxis, support networks, and the community context. In this sense, Clinical Social Work cannot be reduced to symptomatic evaluation or isolated individual interventions; rather, it requires a systemic perspective that integrates the structure and quality of interpersonal bonds as central determinants of psychosocial well-being.

From a critical perspective, Clinical Social Work emphasizes reciprocity and mutuality as guiding principles of intervention, avoiding technocratic reductionisms that decontextualize the individual's subjective experience. In the previously cited work, it is argued that Social Work praxis in mental health must integrate ethical-political dimensions, fostering reflexivity, agency, and resilience in the professional as key elements in the co-construction of the therapeutic process (Francis, 2014). Within this framework, the therapeutic relationship is conceived not only as a space for containment and support, but as a structural transformation device within the individual's psychosocial reality.

Likewise, Clinical Social Work practice should be oriented toward an emancipatory approach that recognizes the individual's agency in the construction of their own identity narrative. In this sense, this professional specialization does not assume the role of granting power, but rather acts as a facilitator in the generation of processes that enable the reconfiguration of the individual's social positioning, promoting their active participation in decision-making and the redefinition of their life trajectory. This model, by distancing itself from assistentialist and paternalistic approaches, prioritizes a perspective of progressive autonomy, where the individual emerges as both the author and agent of their own

therapeutic process (Francis, 2014).

Theoretical frameworks supporting Clinical Social Work today

Clinical Social Work, in its ontological foundation, is undeniably structured as a professional praxis centered on the articulation of human relational construction and the elaboration of intersubjective meanings in the intervention of psychosocial issues. Historically, its theoretical-methodological development has been grounded in conceptual frameworks predominantly exogenous to the discipline, which have enabled a deeper examination of the complexity of human interactions and their impact on both subjective and collective well-being. However, this paradigmatic incorporation has often operated from disparate epistemological approaches, resulting in conceptual fragmentation and the absence of an integrative framework that provides coherence and systematization for analysis and intervention in clinical contexts.

According to the work Discovering theory in clinical practice. *A casebook for clinical counseling and Social Work practice*, edited by Rhonda Peterson and Michelle R. Evans (2021), one of the main theoretical frameworks used by Clinical Social Work has been Systems Theory, which offers a holistic conceptualization that allows us to analyze the interdependence of human relationships in various sociocultural structures, such as the family, support networks, and community institutions. This theory fundamentally emphasizes that individuals do not exist in isolation but are instead embedded within interconnected systems, whose configurations and operational logics shape both their life trajectories and their process of meaning-making in reality. In this sense, systems can function both as facilitators of personal development and as factors of vulnerability, influencing the construction of meanings and shaping the ways in which individuals interact with their immediate environment.

Likewise, Clinical Social Work has also been influenced by Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT), which posits that identity and subjectivity emerge and are reconfigured within interpersonal interactions, where power relations and structures of domination play a determining role. According to this approach, social isolation and fragmentation constitute sources of psychosocial distress, whereas relationships grounded in authenticity and reciprocity enhance individual agency and social change. Additionally, this framework requires Clinical Social Work professionals to adopt a reflective perspective on the power structures embedded in human interactions, as these significantly shape both the configuration of reality and the construction of meaning by individuals (Peterson & Evans, 2021).

Finally, another important approach within this specialized field of Social Work is Narrative Therapy, a psychotherapeutic model that focuses on the re-signification of subjective experiences through the reconstruction of life stories. This perspective asserts that the way individuals discursively structure their experiences determines their self-perception and understanding of their environment, shaping their identity and coping strategies. From this viewpoint, the therapeutic process is oriented toward facilitating a narrative rewriting exercise, fostering the transformation of meanings and promoting greater self-determination and a more harmonious psychosocial development (Peterson & Evans, 2021).

This key approach in Clinical Social Work enables individuals to take an active role in the reconstruction of their life narratives, redefining the meaning of their trajectories and enhancing their empowerment.

Ultimately, these theoretical frameworks represent the main paradigmatic foundations upon which Clinical Social Work has structured its development as a specialty in recent years. Their purpose has been to optimize individual well-being through the strengthening of healthy intersubjective relationships and the co-construction of shared meanings. By implementing intervention strategies aimed at reconfiguring social systems, reinforcing relationships based on reciprocity, and re-signifying subjective narrative structures, Clinical Social Work positions itself as a key mechanism in driving transformative processes with impact at both the micro level and within the broader social context.

Despite these advances, the specialty, like the discipline as a whole, has lacked an integrative and unifying theoretical framework capable of effectively articulating the various approaches within a coherent, holistic, and endogenous epistemological structure. The absence of such a framework limits the deepening of its disciplinary identity, its consolidation as a specialized scientific field, and its capacity to generate a comprehensive and interpretive theory of psychosocial phenomena, which could expand its impact within the mental health field.

Clinical Social Work intervention in the family and support networks

In the clinical context, relational Social Work must be grounded in a theoretical framework that fundamentally acknowledges the interdependence of systems such as family and social support networks as determining factors in health and illness processes. The family, as a dynamic relational system in constant reorganization, can simultaneously function as a vulnerability factor or a resilience resource, shaping the trajectory of clinical processes through mechanisms of emotional co-regulation, power dynamics, and communicational structures.

From a relational perspective, the clinical social worker's intervention should focus on identifying and restructuring dysfunctional interaction patterns, promoting the construction of family narratives that enhance individual agency and facilitate the co-construction of meanings oriented toward well-being. Additionally, the strategic coordination of support networks strengthens both the individual's coping capacity and that of their immediate environment, consolidating a social ecology that fosters sustainable processes of change and recovery.

Following this logic, in the work *Mental health and Social Work*, edited by Rosaleen Ow and Abner Weng Cheong Poon (2020), it is argued that, in the context of the deinstitutionalization of mental health services, families have taken on a predominant role in the provision of care for individuals with severe mental disorders. This structural shift has necessitated the reformulation of social intervention paradigms, positioning the family as a central node in the dynamics of treatment and recovery.

Along these lines, from a systemic approach, family intervention models have emerged in various international contexts, with notable experiences in the United States

and Australia that prioritize the inclusion of the family unit within the structure of mental health services. These approaches enable the assessment and addressing of the family's multidimensional needs, even promoting the active participation of children within the family group when appropriate. In this regard, it is a well-established fact that coordination between family members and interdisciplinary mental health care teams is a key factor in the consolidation of effective and sustainable recovery processes (Ow & Poon, 2020).

Social support networks, in turn, also serve as fundamental mechanisms in the recovery trajectory of individuals with mental disorders. These networks, composed of family members, friends, and other caregivers, provide essential resources for household management, childcare, and emotional support during crisis situations. In this regard, Clinical Social Work is tasked with promoting an inclusive approach that encourages the active participation of significant actors in the lives of clients, facilitating a supportive and stable environment that optimizes psychosocial rehabilitation processes (Ow & Poon, 2020).

In conclusion, within the field of Clinical Social Work, adopting a relational intervention approach is imperative to overcome the limitations of reductionist psychological perspectives, which conceptualize mental health care from a strictly individualistic and intrapsychic lens. The inherent complexity of well-being and quality of life demands a comprehensive ecosystemic therapeutic model that considers the multidimensional nature of the intersubjective construction of reality.

Within this framework, it is recognized that mental health issues cannot be addressed in isolation, but must instead be understood within the fabric of family dynamics, support networks, socioeconomic structures, and community contexts, which collectively shape the human experience as a whole. The development of a therapeutic paradigm with this orientation would significantly enhance the specialization of Clinical Social Work, providing it with a robust theoretical and methodological structure to intervene in the complex psychosocial configurations of contemporary society. Such an integrated approach would ensure that interventions adequately respond to the multiple layers of influence shaping subjectivity and social well-being.

Challenges and opportunities for Clinical Social Work

As has been observed, the consolidation of Clinical Social Work as a specialty with its own epistemological and methodological identity—much like the discipline as a whole—undoubtedly requires the development of a systemic-relational therapeutic model that transcends the limitations imposed by psychologistic and biomedical approaches. This model must be based on a perspective that consistently recognizes mental health as an intersubjective construction, shaped by multiple levels of influence, ranging from individual and family dynamics to macro-contextual social structures.

One of the primary challenges lies in the need to develop a specialized approach that provides clinical social workers with robust yet flexible theoretical and methodological tools. The incorporation of systemic and relational paradigms into clinical practice requires not only an understanding of intervention models rooted in complexity, but also the ability to formulate therapeutic strategies that integrate the intersubjective dimension of psychosocial distress. The integration of intervention dimensions—including families, groups,

support networks, and the broader community—as well as the application of narrative analysis and dynamic-relational methodologies, becomes essential for ensuring the effectiveness of this distinct disciplinary approach.

The integration of the systemic-relational therapeutic model into mental health care systems represents another crucial challenge, as these systems continue to operate under biomedical and reductionist paradigms, prioritizing individualistic interventions focused on symptom treatment, while neglecting a relational and structural understanding of psychosocial issues (Ow & Poon, 2020). In this regard, the consolidation of Clinical Social Work requires active involvement in decision-making spaces to redefine regulatory frameworks and public policies, advocating for the inclusion of therapeutic approaches that go beyond traditional clinical reductionism. To achieve this, there is an urgent need for academic and scientific advancement within the profession in this area.

Notwithstanding all the previously stated challenges, the development of a systemic-relational therapeutic model, grounded in a theoretical framework specific to the profession, represents a crucial opportunity for the specialization of Clinical Social Work. By conceptualizing mental health as a relational and contextually determined phenomenon, this approach would enable a more comprehensive and transformative intervention, aimed not only at symptom mitigation but also at reconfiguring the interaction systems that perpetuate psychosocial distress. Furthermore, it would promote a practice centered on the co-construction of solutions with intervention subjects, fostering their agency and active participation in the therapeutic process.

In summary, the consolidation of Clinical Social Work as a specialized field requires the design of a therapeutic model that establishes its own identity within the mental health sector. To achieve this, it is essential to promote research and the development of systemic-relational approaches within the academic sphere, generate empirical evidence on the effectiveness of these intervention designs, and influence public policies in this area. Only through an endogenous process of theoretical and methodological construction can Clinical Social Work establish itself as a key actor in transforming mental health care paradigms, ensuring more comprehensive and contextually relevant interventions that align with the realities of individuals and their environments.

Challenges and Opportunities of a Distinctive Theory for Social Work

Ultimately, and in a broad sense, the development of a distinct relational theoretical paradigm in Social Work constitutes a highly complex epistemic endeavor, requiring an interdisciplinary approach and a rigorous systematization of knowledge drawn from various fields, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, systems theory, and even the long-neglected domain of philosophy. In this regard, the construction of a theoretical framework is not merely an exercise in conceptual integration but also a heuristic re-elaboration that ensures both its internal coherence and its alignment with the epistemological and axiological principles of Social Work. Such an undertaking also demands a critical reflection on the mechanisms of theoretical-practical translation, enabling its effective applicability across the various social intervention settings.

One of the main challenges in this direction is the design of operational models that enable the practical application of the relational approach in Social Work. This process requires the development of robust assessment methodologies, the creation of intervention strategies aligned with a relational ontology, and the formulation of monitoring mechanisms that allow for continuous evaluation of their effectiveness and relevance. Such tools must be designed under principles of adaptability and flexibility, ensuring their applicability across diverse social contexts and in populations with differentiated needs. Moreover, it is crucial that these mechanisms facilitate multilevel articulation between the micro, meso, and macro dimensions of social intervention, fostering theoretical-practical coherence in the operationalization of the relational approach.

Despite the inherent challenges of this process, the consolidation of a specific relational theorization for Social Work represents a paradigmatic opportunity for its disciplinary autonomization and the strengthening of its scientific, interpretative, and instrumental capacity. The development of a distinct systemic-relational theoretical framework would not only provide a deeper understanding of the intersubjective and structural dynamics shaping psychosocial reality, but also enable the formulation of intervention strategies with a greater degree of epistemological, ethical, and pragmatic coherence. In this sense, a robust relational theorization could position Social Work as a disciplinary field with the capacity for its own theoretical production, enhancing its role in generating innovative and sustainable responses to emerging social challenges.

2. WORLDVIEW AND DISCIPLINARY IDENTITY

What is Social Work?

ACCORDING TO ANDER-EGG (1993), Social Work is a form of social action aimed at intervening in problems affecting individuals, groups, or communities. The purpose of this intervention is to resolve issues and meet needs that people cannot address or overcome on their own. The author defines Social Work as a social technology, as it relies on a set of operational procedures, scientific knowledge, and empirical insights drawn from various disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, and economics, among others.

Additionally, according to the author, Social Work is characterized as a humanistic profession, one that values and respects human dignity, adopting a systemic approach that considers both context and the interactions between various factors influencing social reality. Social workers do not act merely to provide assistance, but rather to promote the development of individuals and communities, facilitating their active participation in solving their own problems (Ander-Egg, 1993).

On the other hand, according to the *National Association of Social Workers*, NASW (2017), Social Work is defined as a profession whose primary mission is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people, with special attention to those who are vulnerable, oppressed, or living in poverty.

According to this organization, Social Work has a dual focus, centering both on individual well-being within a social context and on the well-being of society as a whole. A

fundamental aspect of the profession is the attention to environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address the issues affecting people's quality of life (NASW, 2017).

Social workers promote social justice and social change, working collaboratively with their clients, who may be individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities. They are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and actively fight against discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice (NASW, 2017).

The work of a social worker, therefore, may include direct practice, community organization, supervision, consulting, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, therapy, research, and evaluation, as well as any other form of intervention that contributes to human well-being (NASW, 2017).

Principles and values of Social Work

The principles and values of Social Work form the ethical foundation that guides the actions of professionals in this discipline, ensuring that their intervention aligns with respect for human dignity and social justice. These concepts establish a normative and moral framework that directs decision-making, always promoting people's well-being and the protection of their rights. These foundations are essential for maintaining an ethical relationship with clients, ensuring their confidentiality, autonomy, and recognition of their intrinsic worth.

In this regard, according to Ander-Egg (1993), the fundamental principles and values of Social Work include the following key aspects:

1. Humanism.
2. Personalism.
3. Pluralism.
4. Self-determination.
5. Social justice.

These principles form the ethical and philosophical foundation upon which the professional practice of Social Work is structured, guiding it toward the promotion of dignity, freedom, solidarity, and mutual respect.

1. Humanism

According to Ander-Egg (1993), the principle of humanism is fundamental in Social Work practice, as it places the human being at the center of all social intervention. This principle emphasizes human dignity as a supreme value and upholds the idea that every individual must be treated as an end in themselves, never as a means to other ends. This implies that the social worker must respect people's autonomy and facilitate the development of their abilities, enabling them to resolve their own problems.

Key concepts of humanism according to Ander-Egg:

1. **Human dignity:** Respect for the person is an absolute value that transcends any intervention plan or technique. From this perspective, Social Work must always seek to protect and promote human dignity (Ander-Egg, 1993).

2. **Fraternity and solidarity:** Ander-Egg highlights that humanism is not only about recognizing individual dignity but also about promoting fraternity and solidarity among human beings. This means that Social Work must foster a supportive community, where people are not isolated but rather collaborate and support one another (Ander-Egg, 1993).

3. **Humanism as a task:** The author emphasizes that humanism is an ongoing effort, requiring the creation of conditions that allow all human beings to fully participate in social life and achieve their full personal development. In this sense, Social Work is not merely a technical activity but a commitment to the promotion of humanity (Ander-Egg, 1993).

4. **Overcoming paternalism:** The humanism proposed by Ander-Egg also entails moving beyond assistentialism and paternalism. Instead of providing aid in an authoritarian manner, Social Work should focus on awakening the latent capacities of individuals and communities, fostering their self-development (Ander-Egg, 1993).

According to Di Carlo (1997), the humanist paradigm is essential in Social Work, as it places the human being at the center of intervention, recognizing them as a rational subject capable of self-determination. This approach distinguishes Social Work from assistentialism and paternalism, promoting equality, dignity, and justice as fundamental ethical principles. The author also criticizes the current disconnection between social sciences and humanism, arguing that Social Work must be a transformative practice, where both values and methodology are directed toward enhancing the subject's autonomy and self-reflection within their social context.

2. Personalism

Personalism in Social Work is based on respect for the human person as an absolute value. This principle emphasizes that no plan, technique, or reason of State can supersede the value of the person. The individual must always be regarded as an end in themselves, never as a means to achieve other objectives (Ander-Egg, 1993).

Key elements of personalism:

1. **Absolute value of the human person:** Personalism emphasizes that the human

being has an incomparable and absolute value. People cannot be used as instruments to achieve external goals. Every Social Work intervention must begin with profound respect for the dignity and worth of individuals, without imposing an external purpose upon them (Ander-Egg, 1993).

2. **Communion and solidarity:** This principle holds that the full realization of the human person cannot occur in isolation, but rather through relationships with others. Ander-Egg stresses that the promotion of the individual must be interwoven with community development, fostering solidarity and interdependence. The goal is not for one person to advance at the expense of others, but for well-being and progress to be shared collectively (Ander-Egg, 1993).

3. **Respect for differences and self-determination:** Personalism also entails respect for human diversity, both in individual and collective differences. It upholds the idea that each individual or community must have the freedom to determine their own destiny, respecting their psychological, cultural, and social characteristics (Ander-Egg, 1993).

Personalism in Social Work promotes a vision in which each person is respected for their absolute value and dignity, while personal fulfillment is achieved within the context of solidarity and community relationships.

3. Pluralism

Pluralism is a fundamental principle of Social Work, referring to the recognition and respect for cultural, social, political, and religious diversity in social interventions. This principle asserts that there cannot be a single way to understand or address social problems, and that it is essential to accept the coexistence of multiple perspectives, values, and solutions (Ander-Egg, 1993).

Key elements of pluralism in Social Work:

1. **Respect for diversity:** Pluralism involves recognizing and respecting differences among individuals, whether cultural, social, or personal. Ander-Egg emphasizes that social workers must be able to act with sensitivity toward this diversity, without imposing a single set of values or beliefs, but rather respecting the self-determination of individuals and communities (Ander-Egg, 1993).

2. **Promotion of inclusion:** Pluralism promotes the inclusion of all groups in society, regardless of their origin, religion, social class, or any other characteristic. In this regard, Social Work must strive to eliminate barriers that prevent individuals from fully participating in social and political life (Ander-Egg, 1993).

3. **Intercultural dialogue:** Ander-Egg highlights the importance of intercultural dialogue as a tool for addressing challenges posed by diversity. The social worker must be prepared to mediate and facilitate communication between individuals and groups with different values and perspectives, always seeking inclusive and respectful solutions (Ander-Egg, 1993).

Pluralism in Social Work is a principle aimed at promoting respect and inclusion of human diversity in all its forms, ensuring that social interventions are conducted fairly, inclusively, and with respect for individual and collective differences (Ander-Egg, 1993).

4. Self-determination

The principle of self-determination in Social Work is essential to ensuring respect for the rights and dignity of individuals and communities. Self-determination refers to the right of individuals to make informed and autonomous decisions about their own lives and the courses of action they wish to follow. Ander-Egg highlights that this principle involves recognizing each person's ability to identify their own needs and determine how they should be addressed (Ander-Egg, 1993).

Key elements of self-determination:

1. **Right to make decisions:** Every individual has the right to make their own decisions, especially regarding solutions to their personal, social, or economic problems. The social worker must act as a facilitator, providing information and support, but without imposing solutions (Ander-Egg, 1993).

2. **Promotion of autonomy:** The principle of self-determination emphasizes the importance of individuals becoming protagonists in their own processes of change. The social worker must help people develop their skills and resources, so they can address their problems independently (Ander-Egg, 1993).

3. **Relationship with responsibility:** Self-determination is not an isolated process; it is linked to individual and social responsibility. People not only have the right to decide over their own lives, but also the responsibility to consider how their decisions affect others and society as a whole (Ander-Egg, 1993).

4. **Equality of opportunity:** This principle is also connected to equal access to opportunities. Social Work must ensure that all individuals, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or social status, have equal opportunities to receive support and make decisions about their lives (Ander-Egg, 1993).

Self-determination is fundamental in Social Work, according to Ander-Egg, as it empowers individuals to take control of their own lives, thereby promoting their dignity, autonomy, and problem-solving capacity (Ander-Egg, 1993).

5. Social justice

Finally, the principle of social justice is one of the fundamental pillars of Social Work, as this field aims to transform the conditions that generate inequalities, marginalization, and social exclusion. The author defines social justice as a strategic objective that seeks to overcome poverty, marginalization, and exploitation, promoting a more equitable and solidarity-based society (Ander-Egg, 1993).

Key elements of social justice:

1. **Equality of opportunities:** Ander-Egg emphasizes that social justice ensures that all individuals have access to the necessary resources to live with dignity. This includes access to social services, education, healthcare, and employment. Social workers must advocate for the elimination of barriers that prevent certain groups from fully participating in society (Ander-Egg, 1993).

2. **Redistribution of resources:** A central aspect of social justice is the equitable redistribution of economic and social resources. Ander-Egg suggests that social policies and Social Work interventions should be aimed at reducing gaps in wealth and opportunities among different population sectors (Ander-Egg, 1993).

3. **Structural transformation:** The author states that social justice is not limited to providing immediate assistance, but rather seeks to modify social structures that perpetuate inequality. This involves a commitment to building a new type of society, where everyone's rights are respected, and where each individual can fully develop (Ander-Egg, 1993).

4. **Active participation:** According to Ander-Egg, social justice also involves the active participation of the most vulnerable sectors in constructing their own processes of improvement. Social Work must empower individuals and communities to organize and advocate for their rights and fair treatment (Ander-Egg, 1993).

Social justice is a principle that guides Social Work toward equity, solidarity, and social transformation, with the goal of building a more just and participatory society (Ander-Egg, 1993).

Ontological and epistemological foundations of Social Work

The ontological and epistemological foundations of Social Work constitute the essential pillars upon which its theoretical and practical framework is built. The ontology of Social Work refers to how the nature of the human being and the social reality in which

they operate is understood. This approach addresses fundamental questions about the nature of individuals, social relationships, and the structures that shape their environment, allowing Social Work professionals to develop a deep understanding of the issues affecting individuals and communities. On the other hand, the epistemology of Social Work focuses on how knowledge is generated, acquired, and validated within this discipline. It concerns the ways in which social workers gather the necessary information to understand and address social issues, as well as the methods they employ to ensure that their interventions are effective and based on rigorous evidence.

Both concepts are crucial in shaping how social reality and knowledge are conceived within this profession, directly influencing how professionals approach interventions with individuals, families, groups, and communities. Additionally, they provide the philosophical foundations for the ethical and methodological decisions that social workers must make in their daily practice, ensuring that their actions align with a comprehensive and contextualized understanding of social reality.

Ontological foundations of Social Work

The ontology of Social Work, as previously mentioned, refers to the nature of being and reality—how existence and the world are conceived. As a discipline within the social sciences, Social Work is concerned with social reality, which must be understood as a product of historical, cultural, and social interactions among individuals. The ontology of Social Work pertains to the concept of the "social being," meaning how individuals are constituted and how they interact within a social reality, enabling an in-depth analysis of social needs and intervention strategies (Castro et al., 2014).

The main ontological foundations of the discipline include:

1. **The social nature of human beings:** People are conceived as inherently social beings, whose identity and well-being are intrinsically linked to their relationships with others and their social context. Humans are not understood in isolation but as part of broader systems such as family, community, and society.

   According to Castro et al. (2014), individuals develop through their group and social interactions. The authors explain that personal identity is constructed through a process of socialization, in which individuals assume various roles and learn fundamental behavioral norms. This perspective emphasizes that human beings do not exist in isolation but are products of their environment and relationships with others.

2. **Interdependence:** Individuals and social systems are interconnected, meaning that social, emotional, and psychological problems cannot be understood in isolation but are instead linked to social structures and interpersonal dynamics.

   According to Castro et al. (2014), all social reality phenomena exist in mutual relation and dependence, suggesting that reality cannot be understood as a collection of isolated elements but as an interrelated whole. This implies that social

phenomena are in constant interaction and transformation, and a deeper understanding requires addressing these interconnections and their evolving nature.

3. **Dynamism and social change:** Social Work is based on the idea that social reality is not static but dynamic and constantly changing. Castro et al. (2014) argue that social structures and phenomena are not fixed but subject to continuous transformations. This approach recognizes that, since social reality is in constant motion, its analysis and theories must adapt to its changing nature, emphasizing the processes of change that generate new forms of social and cultural organization.

4. **The capacity for agency:** Human beings are creators and generators of meaning in relation to others. This capacity for creation is linked to their interaction with the social and cultural environment, enabling them to shape their reality and that of others. Castro et al. (2014) suggest that human agency is connected to the ability to reflect, question, and critique established social structures, allowing individuals to influence their environment and ultimately transform it.

Epistemological foundations of Social Work

Epistemology, on the other hand, refers to the nature of knowledge, that is, how we acquire and validate what we know. This aspect provides the foundation for understanding the object of study and intervention, and its role is crucial for the evolution and theoretical development of Social Work. In this regard, Castro et al. (2014) point out that epistemology in the profession is linked to research methodology and theoretical intervention models, suggesting that these elements are essential for constructing theoretical frameworks that guide the professional practice of social workers.

Some of the main epistemological foundations of this profession include the following elements:

1. **Social constructivism:** This perspective holds that social reality is constructed through shared interactions and narratives among individuals and communities. Social problems and their solutions are understood as constructions that depend on collective interpretations and perceptions.

   According to Castro et al. (2014), knowledge is not something innate or pre-existing but rather the result of social interaction and is constructed within the context of collective experience. In this area, authors such as Dean and O'Malley explore social constructivism, analyzing how perceptions, emotions, desires, and concepts are shaped through social interaction and how these processes continuously mold and recreate the reality people experience.

2. **Critical perspective:** Social Work recognizes that knowledge is not neutral but is influenced by power relations and structures of oppression. From this perspective, it is necessary to question how knowledge has historically been produced and used

to maintain social inequities. Critical epistemology promotes the inclusion of marginalized voices in the creation of knowledge.

Adams, Dominelli, and Payne (2002) highlight key points of the critical perspective in Social Work, including:

- **Questioning norms and assumptions:** Critical practice challenges the underlying assumptions and norms in Social Work that often reinforce inequalities. This requires ongoing analysis of policies and power dynamics that affect clients' lives.

- **Reflexivity:** Social workers must constantly reflect on their own practice, understanding how their own biases and positions can influence their work with clients. This self-reflection is essential to avoid perpetuating inequalities and to improve the quality of interventions.

- **Focus on social justice:** Critical practice seeks to transform unjust social relationships and promote equity. This includes working to reduce the oppression experienced by marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and women, among others.

- **Client empowerment:** A key goal is to empower individuals and communities, not only so they can make informed decisions about their lives but also so they can challenge the structures that oppress them.

- **Social transformation:** Critical practice is not limited to individual changes but aspires to generate structural transformations, fostering social and political changes that benefit disadvantaged communities.

3. **Pragmatism:** Social Work has a practical dimension that guides its epistemology. Knowledge is valued based on its usefulness in solving concrete social problems. Social workers use interdisciplinary and evidence-based approaches to guide their interventions.

4. **Participatory research:** In knowledge production, approaches that actively involve communities affected by social problems are prioritized. Participatory research and the co-construction of knowledge are central epistemological approaches in Social Work, as they seek to empower communities.

In summary, the ontological foundations of Social Work are based on an interconnected and dynamic view of social reality, while the epistemological foundations focus on participatory, constructivist, and critical approaches to knowledge. These foundations enable the discipline to address both direct intervention and structural change in the pursuit of social justice.

Final reflection on the identity of Social Work

Fantova (2009) addresses the professional identity of Social Work from a reflective and dynamic perspective that is quite compelling. He argues that the identity of the social worker is not static but is constructed through interaction with other disciplines and in response to changes in social policy and welfare action. For the author, the identity of Social Work is deeply connected to its ability to intervene in human interaction and at the points where people engage with their environment, particularly in relational and community contexts.

In this reflective approach, it is emphasized that rather than being defined by the problems it addresses (poverty, exclusion, discrimination, etc.), the identity of Social Work should focus on the goods it promotes, such as personal autonomy and social integration. This perspective would allow the discipline to occupy a unique space within social policy, with a focus on human interaction and the dynamic adjustment between the personal and the relational (Fantova, 2009).

Additionally, the author suggests that the identity of Social Work is reinforced through knowledge management and collaboration with other disciplines, while also maintaining a specific positioning within social policy. For him, the profession should be recognized for its ability to generate added value in interpersonal relationships, mediation, and accompaniment in processes of change, which defines its identity within a broader context of pro-wellbeing action (Fantova, 2009).

In summary, this reflection suggests that the identity of Social Work is constructed through a relational, community-based, critical, and transformative approach, supported by synergy with other professions and the ability to manage and produce its own scientific knowledge.

3. GENERAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE TCCR

THE *COGNOSYSTEMIC THEORY of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction* (TCCR) emerges as a profound attempt to capture and understand the richness of human experience within the most holistic analytical framework possible. Aiming to establish a solid conceptual and theoretical foundation, the TCCR seeks to address the complexity of psychosocial phenomena by exploring how the human narrative systems that individuals construct shape their perception of their environment and their understanding of themselves. In simple terms, the primary objective of this theoretical framework is to integrate multiple facets of constructionist, systemic-relational, and cogno-narrative approaches, intertwining the individual with their community and broader context. This integration seeks to provide meaning to the dynamics that shape the intersubjective reality shared socioculturally by all individuals, from a scientific, comprehensive, and logically coherent perspective.

This theoretical framework seeks to bring the TCCR to life by drawing upon well-established approaches such as sociological phenomenology and psychosocial constructionism. These perspectives aid in understanding the construction of meaning as a profoundly relational, intersubjective, and ever-evolving process. Social phenomenology highlights the importance of everyday experience, emphasizing how each individual interprets the world based on shared meanings that emerge through interactions with others. Each person constructs their reality uniquely, shaped both by personal experiences and the social structures in which they participate.

Social constructivism, in turn, complements this idea by asserting that knowledge is not a passive reflection of the world but an active creation shaped by social interaction.

Meanings are collectively negotiated and constructed, and knowledge emerges as a product of relationships and agreements within a group or community. In this process, each individual plays a fundamental role, dynamically engaging in the construction of the shared systemic reality.

Thus, the TCCR integrates the perspective that human beings, through their interactions, weave the narratives that shape their reality, continuously generating meaning in every encounter and shared experience.

In this context, language emerges as something far more profound than a mere means of communication; it is the central axis upon which social reality is constructed and transformed. It not only enables individuals to exchange ideas and express thoughts, but—beyond words—it serves as the channel through which individual and collective narratives come to life, solidify, and evolve. Through language, experiences are shaped, and meanings are continuously negotiated, making narratives powerful drivers of both social cohesion and change.

The TCCR embraces this deep understanding of language, recognizing that narratives are neither static nor immutable; on the contrary, they are living systems in constant transformation. These narratives are nurtured by daily interactions between individuals, who, through language, not only transmit information but also actively participate in the creation and recreation of the reality that surrounds them.

As people communicate, they continuously reinterpret their environment and renegotiate the meanings that connect them, leading to the rewriting of social narratives—adapting them to new contexts and challenges. In this way, language becomes the fundamental instrument that enables the evolution of social structures, shaping how communities understand and relate to themselves and others.

In this context, it is evident that the concept of the "Cognosystem" is central within the TCCR. This concept refers to the network of interconnected narrative systems that form part of the human psychosocial experience. This narrative network does not exist in isolation; rather, it develops and transforms through the influence of multiple ecosystemic levels, including personal, familial, community, and cultural narratives.

The "Cognosystem" represents a space where narratives intertwine and mutually modify one another, generating a continuous feedback process that encompasses ascending, descending, and horizontal influences. This perspective acknowledges narrative plasticity, meaning that individuals do not merely receive and replicate narratives but actively participate in their creation, contributing to shaping reality based on their experiences and contextual interactions.

The TCCR thus seeks to position itself as a theoretical tool for analysis, research, and psychosocial intervention in Social Work and similar disciplines, offering a comprehensive perspective that goes beyond merely describing phenomena to actively promoting transformation. This theoretical framework aims to establish the foundations for understanding, through the TCCR approach, how the narrative systems constructed by individuals, families, organizations, and communities can be intervened in and rewritten to foster well-being, resilience, and a renewed sense of agency.

Within this logic, intervention based on this innovative theoretical proposal involves guiding individuals and collectives in the process of identifying, questioning, and transforming the narratives that limit their development and potential, fostering the emergence of new life stories that promote inclusion, social justice, and empowerment.

Ultimately, the present theoretical framework of the *Cognosystemic Theory of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction* (TCCR) seeks to establish the foundations for understanding the complexity of human experience from a psychosocial relational perspective. By integrating phenomenological, psychological, constructionist, systemic, and sociocultural approaches, it proposes a comprehensive and multifocal vision, in which narratives and context dynamically intertwine to shape shared reality.

Consequently, this theoretical proposal not only invites us to understand how meanings and realities are constructed, but also encourages the active transformation of these multilevel narrative systems to build a world more aligned with individual and collective aspirations and values.

Thus, TCCR is not merely presented as an academic theory, but as a call to action and reflection on the transformative power embedded in human narratives.

I. PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Phenomenological approach

Phenomenology is a philosophical tradition that focuses on the study and description of conscious experiences as they are lived from a first-person perspective. The goal of phenomenology is to understand the essence of experiences and phenomena, placing special emphasis on perception, thought, memory, language, desire, and emotion. This approach is distinguished by its attempt to capture the immediacy of human experience and the meaning individuals assign to their experiences (Moran, 2000).

The main exponents of phenomenology include Edmund Husserl, considered the founder of this tradition, as well as Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean-Paul Sartre, among others. These thinkers have had a profound influence on the development of the sciences, particularly the social sciences, by providing an innovative framework for understanding human experience and social reality. Phenomenological perspectives have contributed to a deeper understanding of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, impacting the study of culture, politics, language, and social interaction in contemporary society, while promoting a more holistic and humanistic approach within the social sciences (Moran, 2000).

As can be seen, in the context of Social Work, phenomenology can significantly contribute to the deep and reflective development of disciplinary psychosocial intervention. According to Thompson (2002), this philosophical perspective can positively influence how social workers perceive and understand their clients' experiences. The author highlights the importance of a reflective practice that goes beyond the application of technical solutions and focuses on the complexity and uniqueness of human experiences—an approach clearly aligned with phenomenology.

This perspective allows social workers not only to act based on pre-established theories and techniques but also to adapt and respond to the particularity of each case, recognizing the significance of the subjective experiences of the individuals they support.

As Finlay (2009) also points out, phenomenology focuses on returning to experiential and embodied meanings, seeking a fresh, complex, and rich description of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived. The author broadly discusses how phenomenology can be applied in various disciplines, including psychology, health, and education, which is also relevant to Social Work in general.

In this sense, phenomenological methods allow social researchers to capture lived experiences and the subjective meanings of individuals, something that can be of particular interest in the field of Social Work, especially in contexts where understanding human experience in complex psychosocial interventions is essential.

Husserl's transcendental phenomenology

Edmund Husserl is considered the father of phenomenology, and his contributions to philosophy are fundamental to understanding this school of thought. His main contributions focus on developing a rigorous methodology for studying conscious experiences and the structure of consciousness. Below are the most fundamental concepts of Husserl's phenomenology:

1. **Transcendental phenomenology:** Husserl primarily focused on what he called a transcendental phenomenology, which seeks to understand how all knowledge and experience depend on the constitutive activities of what he defines as "transcendental consciousness." Here, phenomenology becomes a philosophy that attempts to explain how the transcendental subject constitutes the world of experience, emphasizing the relationship between the subject and the object in the act of knowledge (Husserl, 1988).

2. **Transcendental consciousness:** This concept is the core of Husserl's phenomenology and refers to the realm of pure experience, where all presuppositions about the external world are suspended to focus exclusively on how phenomena present themselves to consciousness. For the author, this transcendental consciousness is the source of all knowledge, as everything humans know about the world and themselves first passes through their conscious experience. It is an intentional consciousness in which objects of the world appear as they are lived and perceived rather than in their objective existence. Thus, studying this consciousness reveals the essential structures of experience and subjectivity (Husserl, 2005).

3. **Intentionality of consciousness:** One of the fundamental principles of Husserl's phenomenology is the assertion that an individual's consciousness is always directed toward "something"; in other words, consciousness is always "consciousness of something" (Husserl, 2002). This implies that one cannot think of the mind or "consciousness" without an object toward which it is oriented. Intentionality thus becomes a central element of Husserlian phenomenology, as it establishes an intrinsic relationship between the subject and the object of experience.

4. **Epoché or phenomenological reduction:** Here, Husserl proposes what he calls "phenomenological reduction" or *epoché* (suspension), which serves as a method to inhibit judgment about the existence of the natural world and focus on how phenomena manifest to the individual's consciousness. This allows for exploring the pure essence of experiences, independently of their correlation with objective reality (Husserl, 1988). This process of "bracketing" or "reducing" experiences to the level of pure consciousness enables the phenomenologist to study the essential structures of experience without the distortions of prior theoretical or empirical interpretations.

5. **Eidetics:** Husserl's eidetic phenomenology seeks to identify the essences or invariable structures of experiences. This is achieved through imaginative variation, a process in which the attributes of a phenomenon are mentally modified to determine which essential aspects cannot be changed without altering the phenomenon itself (Husserl, 2005). This helps to understand the universal and necessary characteristics of categories of experience.

6. **Stream of consciousness:** Husserl describes consciousness as a continuous flow in which the past, present, and future are inextricably linked. This flow is what allows time to be experienced as a continuity rather than as a series of disconnected moments (Husserl, 2002).

7. **Constitution of time:** Husserl's phenomenology is interested in how consciousness "constitutes" time. This means that time, as experienced by humans, is not simply something given but rather something that consciousness actively organizes and structures (Husserl, 2002).

8. **Objective time and subjective time:** Lastly, Husserl distinguishes between objective time (the time measured by clocks and calendars, which is homogeneous and linear) and subjective or internal time (the way humans live and feel the passage of time). Phenomenology focuses on this subjective time, which is essential for understanding the phenomenological experience of the world (Husserl, 2002).

As can be seen, in essence, Husserl proposed a method that opened the doors to studying how people experience things directly, consciously, and uniquely. His goal was to understand the essence of these experiences, focusing on how they appear in the mind before any scientific or theoretical interpretation.

The author believed that, to achieve this, it was necessary to practice *epoché*, which means suspending or bracketing all prior beliefs about the existence of the external world. This allows individuals to focus purely on their perceptions and subjective experiences, which ultimately give true meaning to the experience of reality that each person lives throughout their existence—that is, their unique experience as a person.

Similarly, for Husserl, *intentionality* was another fundamental element, as it refers to the idea that all consciousness is consciousness of something. For example, if someone is thinking about a tree, their consciousness is directed toward the tree—it is not possible to have an experience or a thought without it being referred to something.

Husserl also introduced the concept of *essences* or *eidos*, which are the fundamental and invariable qualities that define what something is. To discover these essences, he proposed the method of *eidetic reduction*, which seeks to identify the essential characteristics that make a phenomenon what it is, through imagination and the variation of examples of that phenomenon.

Husserl emphasized the importance of returning to the *things themselves*, that is, understanding objects, thoughts, and emotions in their purest and most direct form. Thus, phenomenology becomes a descriptive study of lived experience, seeking to capture and describe phenomena as they present themselves in consciousness, without resorting to prior explanations or theoretical frameworks.

For example, to understand a phenomenon such as *sadness*, it is essential to explore how it is subjectively experienced by a specific individual, identifying its essential characteristics and the way it manifests in their particular consciousness. This requires moving away from general psychological or neuropsychological definitions and concepts, a stance that Husserlian philosophy maintains in its critique of psychologism. The latter refers to the tendency to reduce phenomena of consciousness to psychological or biopsychological processes, arguing that such approaches cannot adequately explain the essence of conscious experience, as they overlook the transcendental structures that underpin it (Husserl, 2012).

In response, Husserl proposed a rigorous and methodical approach to capture the complexity of human subjective experiences, offering a deeper and more nuanced perspective on lived reality.

The legacy of Husserl

Several significant phenomenological thinkers emerged from Husserl's school of thought, among whom one of the most important was Martin Heidegger. A student of Husserl, Heidegger revolutionized phenomenology by shifting the focus toward ontology and human existence. In his seminal work *El ser y el tiempo* (1993) [Being and time], he introduced the concept of *Dasein*, often translated as "being-there" or "existence," arguing that human existence is best understood through its relationship with time and the world. Heidegger emphasized the importance of temporality, asserting that human beings are always projected toward the future, while simultaneously being shaped by their past and their present (Heidegger, 1993).

He also introduced the idea of *being-in-the-world*, highlighting that individuals cannot be understood in isolation from their surroundings, as they are always immersed in a specific context (Heidegger, 2003). His ontological-existentialist approach focuses on how humans confront anxiety and the inevitability of death, striving for an authentic sense of being.

Another major classical phenomenological thinker, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, focused his work on "perception" and the "body". In his work *Fenomenología de la percepción* (1993) [Phenomenology of perception], he emphasizes that perceptual experience is the foundation of human understanding of the world, arguing that the body is not merely a passive object but an active participant in the construction of meaning (Merleau-Ponty, 1993).

One of his main criticisms was directed at the Cartesian *mind-body* dualism, proposing instead that human experience is unified and pre-reflective, meaning it exists prior to any conscious analysis. His perspective has significantly influenced fields such as humanistic psychology, anthropology, and cultural studies, promoting a more holistic and embodied approach to human behavior (Merleau-Ponty, 2002).

Finally, Jean-Paul Sartre, influenced by Heidegger, developed a phenomenology that emphasizes freedom, responsibility, and individual existence. Sartre proposed that existence precedes essence, meaning that people first exist and then define their purpose through their actions.

In his work *El ser y la nada* (1993) [Being and nothingness], Sartre explores consciousness as an emptiness that enables freedom and choice, analyzing how the presence of others in the world shapes one's self-perception. He introduces the concept of "bad faith" as a form of self-deception, in which people deny their own freedom by adopting fixed roles to avoid the anxiety that comes with responsibility (Sartre, 1993).

In summary, these phenomenological thinkers, successors of Husserl, expanded and transformed phenomenology by integrating existence, the body, and freedom as fundamental elements in understanding human beings. Each of them contributed new perspectives that have left a profound impact on modern philosophy and the social sciences.

By way of synthesis, a comparative table is presented highlighting the most relevant theoretical contributions of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre to the development of phenomenology:

Concept / Author	**Edmund Husserl**	**Martin Heidegger**	**Maurice Merleau-Ponty**	**Jean-Paul Sartre**
Focuses on:	Mental experiences.	Human existence.	The body and the senses.	Choices and freedom.
How the author studies it:	Analyzing the mind.	Studying the meaning of life.	Observing how the world is felt and perceived.	Analyzing freedom and decisions.
Key idea:	Everything that is thought and felt is directed toward something.	Human life is related to its connection with the world.	The body is the key to experiencing the world.	The human being is free and, therefore, responsible for their life.
How life is perceived:	Through consciousness and thoughts.	As something that is lived with purpose and challenges.	As a sensory and physical experience.	As a project full of personal choices.
View of time:	Time is felt from within.	Life has a past, present, and future that are connected.	Time is tied to how it is lived and felt.	Decisions define the future.
How one interacts with others:	Through mutual understanding.	Through the intertwining of being with others.	Through shared experiences.	Through the mutual influences that people exert on their self-perceptions.

How one lives authentically:	Seeking truth and understanding.	Living according to one's own decisions and truths.	Being aware of how the body relates to the world.	Being honest with oneself and taking responsibility for one's actions.

As previously noted, the phenomenological ideas of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre have had a significant influence on the development of the sciences, particularly in the social sciences, by providing a new framework for understanding human experience and social reality.

Husserl laid the foundation for studying consciousness and experience from a first-person perspective, which opened pathways for investigating how people construct meanings in their everyday interactions. Heidegger extended this approach by analyzing being and existence, helping the social sciences delve deeper into how individuals relate to the world and others.

Merleau-Ponty, with his emphasis on embodiment and perception, influenced fields such as psychology and anthropology by demonstrating how sensory and bodily experience underpins cognition and social interaction. Sartre, in turn, underscored the importance of freedom and individual choice, enriching discussions on personal agency and identity construction in social contexts.

The social phenomenology of Schütz

The social phenomenology of Alfred Schütz is a theory that focuses on how individuals experience and interpret the social world. His work is based on Husserl's phenomenology and seeks to analyze how human beings attribute meaning to actions within a social context (Schütz, 1972).

Schütz argues that the understanding of social action must be based on the subjective meaning that individuals assign to it, emphasizing the importance of interactions and the interpretation of others' actions. He proposes that social reality is organized into different layers, ranging from direct experiences with those who are part of one's immediate environment to relationships with contemporaries, predecessors, and successors, which are more distant from immediate experience. Additionally, the author introduces the concept of *ideal types* to classify and understand social action from a phenomenological perspective, distinguishing between the objective and subjective meaning of actions and cultural products (Schütz, 1972).

The following are the most relevant elements of the author's social phenomenological approach:

a) Intentionality of consciousness

In this concept, the author adopts Husserl's idea that consciousness is always di-

rected toward something, meaning it is intentional. Schütz (2003) uses this concept to explain how individuals in social life direct their attention and consciousness toward specific phenomena, assigning them meaning within their flow of experiences. For Schütz, this orientation is neither random nor merely subjective but is structured by historical and social contexts that preconfigure possible meanings (Schütz, 1972).

Intentionality manifests in how people interpret their experiences and anticipate the actions of others. Schütz (1974) argues that through this intentional process, individuals create and sustain the social world by using *interpretative schemes* that allow them to understand and navigate the complexity of social interaction. This approach highlights the importance of cognitive and perceptual processes in the formation of social reality, suggesting that interpretation and meaning are central to the social experience.

Furthermore, Schütz's work emphasizes that the intentionality of consciousness is not only related to immediate perception but also to memory and anticipation. Consequently, consciousness extends through time, linking past experiences with the present and anticipated future, enabling individuals to plan actions and understand those of others within a coherent temporal continuum (Schütz & Luckmann, 2001).

In summary, for Schütz, the intentionality of consciousness refers to the idea that people always direct their attention and thoughts toward something specific. This means that when someone thinks, feels, or perceives, they always do so by focusing on an object, person, event, or idea. The author believes that this focus is not random but is guided by the individual's prior experiences, beliefs, and expectations. In other words, people do not merely experience the world around them; they actively give it meaning, interpreting it according to what they already know, what they desire, or what they consider important at that moment.

b) Life-world (lebenswelt)

The concept of the *life-world* (lebenswelt) is fundamental in Schütz's social phenomenology and refers to the realm of everyday, direct experience in which individuals carry out their daily activities, interact with others, and make sense of the world. Following Husserl, Schütz views the life-world as the pre-scientific sphere of existence on which all interpretations and meanings are based (Husserl, 2002). In this context, the life-world is a domain of immediate knowledge, composed of physical, social, and cultural realities that are taken for granted.

Schütz and Luckmann (2001) develop this concept by examining how the structures of the life-world organize experience and interpretation. They argue that the life-world is stratified into different layers of reality, including the world of work, where instrumental and practical activities take place, and the spheres of social interaction, where relationships are established and maintained, and meanings are shared.

The *life-world* is also inherently intersubjective: it is shared with others, enabling communication and the formation of shared meanings. Schütz (2003) emphasizes that the life-world is not static but is continuously negotiated and reconstructed through social interactions. Intersubjectivity allows individuals to understand one another and coordinate their actions within a common framework of reality.

Furthermore, the life-world is characterized by its familiarity and naturalness. Schütz (1972) argues that individuals operate within the lifeworld with a natural attitude,

assuming without question the existence and continuity of its structures and contents. This naturalness allows individuals to orient themselves within their social environment and manage the complexity of everyday life.

The life-world in Schütz's social phenomenology is a key concept that describes the fundamental and pre-theoretical sphere of human experience, characterized by intersubjectivity, familiarity, and the constant negotiation and reinterpretation of meanings. This conceptual framework allows for an analysis of how social reality is constructed and maintained through everyday activities and human interactions.

In conclusion, Schütz uses this concept to refer to everything a person considers normal and taken for granted in daily life, such as the things they see, the people they interact with, and the activities they engage in. It functions as the stage where everyday life unfolds, filled with familiar things and shared experiences with others. In this world, people do not need to constantly question how things work because there is already a basic and shared understanding of how life operates. Thus, the lifeworld serves as the common and natural backdrop in which everyone acts and understands each other in their daily interactions.

c) Construction of social reality

In Schütz's social phenomenology, the construction of social reality is understood as a dynamic and continuous process in which individuals, through their interactions and experiences, create and sustain a shared world of meanings and realities. Schütz (2003) argues that social reality is not an external and objective given but is constantly formed and reformed in people's daily activities. Individuals interpret and negotiate the meaning of their experiences and actions within the context of intersubjective relationships.

Schütz focuses on how intersubjectivity, or the ability to share experiences and meanings with others, is essential in the construction of social reality. This process is facilitated by the existence of a set of shared knowledge and interpretative schemes that individuals use to make sense of their world. These schemes are products of socialization and culture, providing a framework for mutual understanding and coordinated action (Schütz & Luckmann, 2001).

According to the author, social reality is stratified into multiple realities, each with its own rules and meanings. These realities include the *life-world*, where social interactions occur immediately and directly, as well as other subordinate or derived worlds, such as art, religion, and science, each with its own systems of meaning and relevance (Schütz, 1972).

Schütz also explores the importance of language in the construction of social reality. For the author, language not only enables the communication of experiences and knowledge between individuals but also serves as a repository of cultural and social meanings, helping to structure and transmit social reality across generations (Schütz, 1974).

The construction of social reality in Schütz's theory is a complex and interactive process in which individuals, using cultural and communicative tools such as language, constantly negotiate and reinterpret the meaning of their shared world. This approach highlights the dynamic and fluid nature of social reality, which emerges from the interweaving of personal and collective experiences within an intersubjective framework.

Ultimately, for Schütz, this concept represents how people create and understand the world they live in through their interactions with others. Each person has their own

perspective, but by sharing experiences, communicating, and working together, they establish a common reality. This means that what is considered normal or true in society is not simply given or natural but is shaped through conversations, agreements, and shared understandings with others. Thus, social reality is like a building that everyone constructs together through their daily relationships and communications.

d) Typifications and ideal types

For Schütz and Luckmann (2001), *typifications* are mental schemas that individuals use to simplify and structure their understanding of the social world. These are generalized categories that allow people to interpret experiences, behaviors, and actions of others quickly and efficiently, based on previous experiences and socially shared expectations. Through typifications, social actors do not have to analyze each situation in detail; instead, they apply these pre-established "templates" to understand everyday reality, facilitating interaction and communication in a complex and dynamic environment. Typifications, therefore, are fundamental for the construction and maintenance of social reality.

From this general concept, Schütz postulates the existence of what he calls *ideal types* within his social phenomenology. However, this theoretical element originates from the work of another significant sociologist, Max Weber, who first used it as a methodological tool to analyze and understand social actions by creating abstract constructions that do not necessarily reflect reality but serve to highlight essential characteristics of certain social phenomena (Weber, 2002).

Schütz, in his social phenomenology, adopts and adapts this concept within his theoretical framework. Rather than applying it strictly in sociological terms as Weber did, he uses it to understand how individuals perceive, interpret, and structure their experiences in everyday life. For Schütz, ideal types are not merely a theoretical tool; they also reflect the interpretative schemas that social actors use to make sense of the world, facilitating the analysis of *intersubjectivity* and how people understand and coordinate their actions in social contexts (Schütz, 2003).

According to Schütz, *ideal types* are simplifications or abstractions of social phenomena that highlight their essential characteristics, eliminating accidental or individual details. These conceptual tools do not aim to describe reality as it is but serve as models or patterns that facilitate the understanding and explanation of social behaviors and processes (Schütz, 1972).

An example would be: "the ideal teacher." This teacher always arrives on time, strictly follows the curriculum, uses effective pedagogical methods, and responds in a balanced way to the needs of each student. However, in reality, teachers may experience distractions, face personal challenges, or adapt differently to each class. The "ideal teacher" does not precisely reflect reality, but it allows for a simplified analysis of teaching. By comparing real teachers to this *ideal type*, it becomes easier to study how they vary in their daily practice.

As seen in the previous example, in practice, *ideal types* help individuals and social scientists interpret and predict social actions, providing a reference framework that organizes observations and experiences (Schütz, 1974). For instance, another ideal type could be the "bureaucrat," which encapsulates the expected characteristics and behaviors of individuals in administrative roles, allowing observers to identify and analyze these behaviors in

real situations through the comparison of ideality and reality.

Therefore, it is important to understand that Schütz is emphatic in stating that these *ideal types* are, ultimately, subjective constructions that depend on the observer's point of view. Their value lies in their ability to facilitate intersubjective understanding and communication by providing a common and simplified basis for interpreting social actions and relationships (Schütz & Luckmann, 2001).

The creation and use of *ideal types*, therefore, are fundamental in the phenomenological analysis of social reality, as they allow individuals and researchers to organize and make sense of the diversity and variability of social experiences, thus constructing a clearer and more systematic understanding of patterns of interaction and behavior in society.

In summary, Schütz's *ideal types* are simplified models that people use to better understand others and predict how they will act. For example, if someone thinks of a "doctor," they likely have a general idea of what a doctor is like and what they do, based on the common characteristics of many doctors they know or imagine. These ideas help individuals classify and make sense of others' behavior in everyday life, even though they do not capture all the unique details of each individual.

e) The epoché of the natural attitude

The concept of the *natural attitude* or *epoché* in Schütz's social phenomenology is key to understanding how individuals experience and relate to the everyday world. Although derived from Husserl, in this context, it refers to the innate predisposition of people to accept the world around them as real and given without critical questioning. In the natural attitude, there is a spontaneous tendency for individuals to assume that their perceptions and experiences of daily life are objective and shared with others (Schütz, 2003).

The author argues that, in the *natural attitude*, human beings interact with the world and with others based on a series of unexamined assumptions that facilitate navigation and functioning within social reality. These assumptions include the continuity and coherence of the external world, the existence of other conscious beings, and the ability to communicate and interact with them (Schütz, 1972).

The *natural attitude* allows people to engage in daily and practical activities without the constant need to reflect on or question the reality of their experiences. This practical and uncritical approach, Schütz points out, is essential for the economy of attention and effort in everyday life, as it enables individuals to focus on specific goals and tasks without being overwhelmed by constant doubt about the existence or nature of the social world (Schütz & Luckmann, 2001).

Furthermore, the author explains that the *natural attitude* serves as the foundation upon which socialization and educational processes are built, as it allows individuals to learn and assimilate the norms, values, and knowledge of their society. In this sense, the *natural attitude* is not only an individual psychological phenomenon but also a sociocultural one that is transmitted and reinforced within communities and across generations (Schütz, 1974).

In simple terms, with this concept, Schütz seeks to explain the natural way in which people accept and take the world around them for granted without constantly questioning it. This means that, in daily life, people do not stop all the time to analyze or doubt everything they experience. No one does! This is a necessary evolutionary element that allows

individuals to develop psychosocially without the constant and overwhelmingly paralyzing pressure (not to mention debilitating) of questioning and doubting every single thing and action they undertake in everyday life.

f) Temporality and structure of consciousness

Lastly, the concept of *temporality and structure of consciousness* in Schütz's phenomenology refers to how individuals perceive and organize their experiences in time, which is essential for understanding and acting in the social world. The author builds on Husserl's notion of internal time-consciousness to explore how past, present, and future experiences interrelate within an individual's consciousness, shaping their perception of reality (Husserl, 2002).

Schütz (1972) argues that consciousness is not a static entity but a temporal flow that extends across the dimensions of past, present, and future. This stream of consciousness allows individuals to connect past experiences with present ones and project future possibilities, providing them with a sense of continuity and coherence in their existence.

Temporality is crucial for understanding how social reality is constructed, according to Schütz, as actions and meanings in social life develop within this temporal framework. Individuals interpret their experiences and those of others within a temporal context, which influences how actions are understood and how activities are planned and coordinated (Schütz & Luckmann, 2001).

Additionally, Schütz introduces the concept of the "stock of knowledge at hand" to explain how accumulated past experiences influence present perception and action. This stock of knowledge functions as a resource that individuals use to interpret current situations and anticipate future ones, relying on previously experienced and learned patterns (Schütz, 2003).

The *structure of consciousness* also involves a selection and hierarchization of experiences, where certain events stand out as significant while others are relegated to the background of awareness. This process of thematization reflects how individuals organize and prioritize their experiences based on their intentions, interests, and current concerns (Schütz, 1974).

The temporality and structure of consciousness in Schütz's social phenomenology, therefore, address how temporal experiences shape the perception and understanding of social reality. This approach highlights the importance of the temporal dimension in interpreting social life, as well as the capacity of consciousness to organize and make sense of experiences within a continuous temporal flow.

Ultimately, Schütz uses this concept to address the phenomenon of how people experience time and how this affects their way of thinking and feeling. Essentially, he suggests that the way one remembers the past, lives in the present, and anticipates the future is interconnected, shaping how life is understood and given meaning in general.

For example, the way a person thinks about what they will do tomorrow is influenced by their past experiences and current situation. Thus, consciousness is organized in such a way that time—with its memories, present experiences, and future expectations—plays a key role in how individuals perceive the world and behave within it.

In conclusion, Alfred Schütz's social phenomenology provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding how individuals interpret and construct the social

world through their interactions and subjective experiences. His focus on the intentionality of consciousness, the lifeworld, the construction of social reality, ideal types, and the temporality of consciousness reveals that social reality is not a fixed datum but a dynamic process of intersubjective negotiation.

The author highlights the importance of historical and cultural context in the formation of meanings, emphasizing that the interpretation of reality is a continuous act that organizes daily life and human relationships.

Approach to the construction of reality

The constructivist approach, deeply rooted in theories of learning and knowledge, is based on the premise that knowledge is not a passive representation of reality but an active process in which individuals construct meanings from their experiences and contexts. This approach has been influenced by thinkers such as Jean Piaget (2013), who proposed that in the learning process, human beings do not simply absorb information from the external world but also interpret, organize, and incorporate it into their cognitive structures through two processes: assimilation and accommodation.

For Piaget, active interaction with the environment is crucial for cognitive development (Piaget & Inhelder, 1997). Constructivism, in this sense, adopts this principle and applies it to learning in general: people learn more effectively when they can interact with and experience their environment rather than passively receiving information.

Within this theoretical framework, learning is understood as an idiosyncratic process in which each individual constructs their understanding of the world based on prior knowledge and unique experiences. The importance of the social and cultural context in this process is also a central pillar of constructivism, highlighting the role of language and social interaction as mediators in the construction of knowledge.

Lev Vygotsky (1973), another prominent exponent of constructivism, emphasized the significance of social environment and community interaction in cognitive development, arguing that learning occurs first at a social level and is then internalized at an individual level—one of the main points of divergence from Piaget's previously mentioned theory.

Epistemology of knowledge construction

Constructivist epistemology is a significant perspective within the theory of knowledge. One of its main exponents is Ernst von Glasersfeld (1995), who generally argues that knowledge is not an objective representation of an external reality but rather an active construction that each individual creates based on their experiences. Through this construction, according to the author, people organize and understand their world, meaning that knowledge does not reflect an ontological reality but is instead an adaptive product that enables them to interact effectively with their environment. This approach is also known as radical constructivism.

According to Glasersfeld (1995), the main characteristics of constructivist epistemology are as follows:

1. **Knowledge is not passive but actively constructed**: The author argues that knowledge is not something passively received but rather the result of an active process of construction by the knowing subject. This means that people create their own interpretations and understandings of the world based on their prior experiences (Glasersfeld, 1995).

2. **Knowledge is adaptive rather than an exact representation of ontological reality**: The primary function of knowledge, according to the author, is to help the subject organize their experiential world rather than to discover an independent objective reality. Instead of being an exact copy of reality, knowledge is an adaptive construction that enables people to effectively navigate their environments (Glasersfeld, 1995).

3. **Viability replaces the concept of truth**: Instead of discussing "truth" in the traditional sense, radical constructivism employs the concept of viability. This means that an idea or piece of knowledge is viable if it works within the subject's experiences and allows them to achieve their goals, rather than being "true" in an absolute sense (Glasersfeld, 1995).

4. **The subject cannot transcend their own experiential limits**: Radical constructivism emphasizes that the subject cannot access a reality beyond their own experiences. Therefore, all knowledge is, by definition, subjective and depends on the individual's personal constructions (Glasersfeld, 1995).

5. **Emphasis on intersubjectivity as a substitute for objectivity**: Finally, although knowledge is subjective, the corroboration of other thinking and conscious beings helps generate a degree of "intersubjectivity," which functions as a replacement for traditional objectivity. This means that agreements and confirmations among individuals help establish a common basis for knowledge (Glasersfeld, 1995).

These characteristics proposed by Glasersfeld highlight a completely new approach to knowledge, in which personal constructions, adaptability, and viability play crucial roles.

Constructivism and social constructionism

Social constructionism, for its part, is a sociological theory that proposes that "social realities" are constructed through human interactions. According to this perspective, beliefs, knowledge, and facts are not merely inherent discoveries of the external world but rather collective constructions created by individuals within a specific cultural and social context.

In relation to this, Berger and Luckmann (2003) argue that social reality is a continuous product of human activities and interpretations. According to them, all knowledge, including the most fundamental concepts of reality—such as time, space, causality, and matter—are products of social interactions and socialization processes.

This process of constructing "reality" involves both the internalization of existing social realities by individuals and the externalization of new realities through action and interaction.

Vygotsky (2009), as a constructivist, emphasizes the significant role of social interaction and culture in the development of thought and knowledge. He argues that higher mental processes first emerge at the social level—between individuals—before being internalized at the individual level. Within this framework, *language* plays a crucial role as a mediating tool in the construction of social reality. Words and sign systems not only facilitate communication but also function as fundamental mechanisms for the creation of social reality, as they enable individuals to share experiences, knowledge, and agreements about the meaning of things.

Both constructivism and social constructionism view "reality" as dynamic and shaped through human interaction, opposing positivist or realist views that consider reality as independent of perception and discoverable through scientific observation and analysis.

By way of synthesis, the key theoretical elements of social constructivism include the following concepts:

a) Construction of reality:

In social constructionism theory, the concept of the *construction of reality* refers to the process by which human beings create and give meaning to their world through social interactions and agreements. This perspective holds that reality is not an objective and fixed entity but is actively shaped by human perceptions, experiences, and communications. Berger and Luckmann (2003) emphasize that reality is a socially constructed phenomenon, where knowledge structures and understandings of the world result from an ongoing social process.

Through socialization, individuals learn and internalize the various realities of their society, including norms, values, language, and symbols, which are essential for human interaction. This learning begins in childhood and continues throughout life as individuals engage in different spheres of social life (Berger & Luckmann, 2003).

The process of reality construction also involves institutionalization, where recurring social practices become stabilized and turn into normative patterns that guide individuals' behavior within a society. Berger and Luckmann (2003) explain that, over time, these institutions become so deeply embedded that people perceive them as objective and unquestionable realities.

From this perspective, reality construction is not an individual act but a collective phenomenon, where shared reality emerges from constant interactions between individuals. This process is dynamic and subject to change, as social realities can be reconstructed or modified through new experiences or interactions.

Social constructivism, for its part, emphasizes the role of language in the construction of reality. Language not only facilitates communication but also serves as a vehicle through which social realities are formed, transmitted, and modified. Through language,

individuals interpret their experiences and negotiate the meaning of their reality with others (Vygotsky, 2009).

In summary, the construction of reality, according to these social constructionist theories, resembles a kind of collective story that is written day by day through people's experiences and conversations. In this narrative, each person contributes their own ideas and perceptions, and together they create a shared story about how they see and understand the world. This story is neither fixed nor identical for everyone; rather, it changes and evolves as individuals interact with one another, sharing and negotiating their thoughts and experiences. Thus, the reality people experience is built through these ongoing interactions, forming a common narrative that gives meaning to their world.

b) Symbolic interactionism:

Symbolic interactionism, within the theoretical framework of social constructionism, is a theory that focuses on how individuals interpret and assign meaning to their social experiences through interactions. This perspective, primarily developed by George H. Mead and later expanded by Herbert Blumer, holds that meanings and reality are socially constructed through communication and interactions between people.

Mead (2009) introduced the idea that the "self" develops through social interaction and that individuals gain self-awareness and awareness of others through a communicative process involving shared meanings and symbols. In this process, individuals see themselves through the eyes of others, a concept the author refers to as the "generalized other." The importance of language in this process is fundamental, as it provides the symbols through which meanings are created and shared.

Blumer (1982) expanded on these ideas and formulated three basic premises of symbolic interactionism:

- *First*: Human beings act toward things based on the meanings those things hold for them.

- *Second*: These meanings arise from social interaction.

- *Third*: These meanings are modified through an interpretative process that each individual uses when encountering stimuli from the external world.

From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, society is not perceived as an external and coercive structure but rather as a dynamic product of social interaction. Individuals do not merely interpret the world around them; they actively modify it through their behavior, based on the interpretation of those meanings (Mead, 2009).

This approach emphasizes the processual and dynamic nature of social reality, considering that individuals and groups are constantly engaged in forming, maintaining, and altering the social fabric through their symbolic interactions. Thus, symbolic interactionism provides an understanding of how individual and collective realities are constructed and sustained, and how social change can emerge from the reinterpretation and renegotiation of meanings.

In conclusion, symbolic interactionism suggests that people understand the world through conversations and actions with others. It proposes that when individuals interact with friends or family, they use words, gestures, and expressions that hold special meanings for them. These meanings are created and modified during interactions with others. For example, a handshake can be interpreted as a way of saying "hello" or "good job," depending on the particular symbolic exchange between individuals. Thus, symbolic interactionism posits that the way people perceive and understand the world is constructed through these interactions and the symbols or signals used within them.

c) Socialization:

Socialization, according to the theory of social constructionism, is a process through which individuals acquire and assimilate the knowledge, skills, norms, values, and roles necessary to integrate and function effectively within their society. This process is essential for the formation of individual identity and the perpetuation of culture and social structures. Berger and Luckmann (2003) conceptualize socialization as a mechanism for transmitting social reality, where individuals learn to navigate the social world through the internalization of their community's expectations and frameworks of reference.

Socialization is divided into two main stages: primary socialization and secondary socialization. During *primary socialization*, which occurs mainly in childhood, individuals acquire the basic competencies for social interaction, including language, norms, and the fundamental values of their culture. In this period, the family plays a crucial role as the primary socializing agent, shaping the individual's first experiences and perceptions of the world (Berger & Luckmann, 2003).

Secondary socialization, on the other hand, refers to the continuous process of learning and adaptation that extends throughout an individual's life. In this stage, people encounter new social contexts, such as school, work, and peer groups, which require the acquisition of specific roles and the adjustment to different norms and expectations (Berger & Luckmann, 2003). Secondary socialization, therefore, enables individuals to develop a more complex and multifaceted identity, adapting to the diversity of roles and situations they encounter in society.

In this context, Giddens (1995) introduces the concept of *double hermeneutics* to highlight the bidirectional nature of the socialization process. Double hermeneutics suggests that, unlike the natural sciences, the social sciences study a world that is already interpreted by social actors themselves. Individuals, in their daily activities, assign meaning to their actions and the surrounding environment, generating interpretive frameworks about the reality they live in. This initial process, in which human beings create and use interpretations to make sense of their experiences, constitutes the first level of hermeneutics in the author's theory.

What makes double hermeneutics distinctive is that social scientists, when studying these interpretive frameworks, do not merely describe human actions from an external perspective. Instead, they reinterpret these meanings through the use of theoretical concepts and analytical frameworks, producing explanations that become part of the socialization process. It is at this second hermeneutic level that bidirectionality manifests: once formulated, social theories can re-enter the social context and be adopted by social actors themselves (Giddens, 1995).

In this way, the theories produced by the social sciences have the potential to influence individual behavior and the social structure as a whole, as social actors can incorporate these theories into their own meaning frameworks, leading to changes in their behavior and the way they interact with institutions. Thus, *double hermeneutics* highlights that social knowledge is inherently reflexive and that the social sciences not only observe the world but also transform it through the dissemination of their theories, creating a continuous cycle of interpretation and reinterpretation between social actors and the scientists who study them.

d) Knowledge and power:

The concept of *knowledge and power* in social constructionism is primarily associated with Michel Foucault's ideas on *power-knowledge*. This philosopher, historian, sociologist, and psychologist argued that knowledge and power are intrinsically interconnected, and that power is not only exercised through coercion or authority but also through the production and control of knowledge. In this sense, power manifests in the ability to define and establish what is considered true or false, normal or abnormal, legitimate or illegitimate (Foucault, 2003).

Foucault introduces the concept of *discourse* to explain how knowledge is intrinsically linked to power. For the author, discourses are sets of ideas, practices, and norms that define and limit what can be said, thought, and done within a specific context (Foucault, 2002). In this regard, he also uses the concept of *regimes of truth* to describe how certain discourses and practices become dominant in a society, excluding and marginalizing other forms of knowledge (Foucault, 1980). These regimes of truth are maintained and reinforced by institutions such as education, science, and the media, which hold the socio-cultural authority to define and validate knowledge (Foucault, 2003).

The relationship between knowledge and power is also evident in how these social institutions are organized and controlled. For example, in the field of medicine, medical knowledge establishes norms regarding what is considered healthy or ill, and these criteria are used to regulate and control people's behavior (Foucault, 2001). Similarly, in the educational system, the knowledge that is taught and the way students are assessed reflect and reinforce specific power relations (Foucault, 2003).

The Foucauldian perspective on knowledge and power has been influential in various fields of study, including sociology, philosophy, and gender studies. For example, in gender studies, scholars have analyzed how knowledge about sexuality and gender is embedded in power relations that define and regulate sexual identities and behaviors in society (Butler, 2007).

In conclusion, the concept of knowledge and power in social constructionism highlights how knowledge is not merely an objective representation of reality but is shaped by power relations that determine what is considered true, valuable, and legitimate. This constructionist perspective invites a critical examination of how knowledge and power intertwine in the construction of social reality.

e) Negotiation of meanings:

The *negotiation of meanings* is a fundamental process within the framework of social constructionism, an approach that asserts that knowledge and reality are socially constructed through human interaction. This perspective argues that meanings are not inherent to objects or phenomena but are the result of collective interpretations that individuals agree upon within a given social and cultural context. In this sense, reality is seen as a dynamic construction, dependent on intersubjective agreements among individuals engaged in communicative exchange (Berger & Luckmann, 2003).

The negotiation of meanings refers, then, to the process through which individuals, using language and social interaction, adjust and reinterpret their understandings of reality based on shared experiences. This process is dialectical and continuous, as interpretations are subject to constant revision depending on the context and the power dynamics present in the interaction (Gergen, 2007). Thus, meaning is not something static or pre-defined but emerges and evolves within the framework of social relationships.

Communication plays a central role in the negotiation of meanings, as language is not only a means of expressing ideas but also a tool for creating shared realities. According to Gergen (1985), words and concepts acquire their meaning based on the contexts in which they are used, and these contexts are embedded in power relations that influence which meanings prevail. Therefore, the *negotiation of meanings* also involves a political dimension, in which social actors can contest and renegotiate which interpretations are considered legitimate or dominant.

This approach has significant implications in various fields of study, such as social psychology, education, and, of course, social work. In the educational field, for example, the negotiation of meanings is a key process in learning, where students and teachers co-construct knowledge through dialogue and joint reflection. In this regard, Vygotsky (2009) points out—as previously mentioned—that learning is a social process in which meanings are developed and consolidated through interaction with others.

In conclusion, the negotiation of meanings, from a social constructionist perspective, is an interactive and continuous process through which people construct reality. This process not only reflects the intersubjective dynamics in which actors participate but also reveals the power structures that shape collective interpretations. Understanding this phenomenon is crucial for comprehending how social realities are configured and transformed in various contexts.

f) Role of institutions:

Within the framework of social constructionism, *institutions* occupy a central role as entities that actively participate in the construction of social reality. Unlike more traditional approaches that consider institutions as objective and permanent structures, social constructionism holds that they are the result of historical processes and social dynamics. Institutions, such as the family, school, or the state, are created and sustained through discursive practices and social interactions, implying that their meanings, functions, and norms are continuously negotiated and redefined (Berger & Luckmann, 2003).

From this perspective, institutions are not merely structures that regulate human behavior but dynamic systems of meaning that shape how people understand and engage

with the social world. Gergen (2007) argues that institutions play a fundamental role in the production of shared meanings, as they provide the interpretive frameworks through which individuals and groups construct their identities and relationships. Through their norms, rituals, and discourses, institutions guide behavior and establish what is considered "real," "correct," or "normal" within a specific social context.

The power of institutions lies in their ability to legitimize and perpetuate certain narratives and power structures while delegitimizing or marginalizing others. Foucault (1995) emphasizes how institutions, particularly those related to education, health, and the judicial system, play a crucial role in the creation of *social subjects*, imposing specific forms of knowledge and behavior that reflect dominant power relations. In this sense, institutions are not neutral; rather, they function as mechanisms of social control that reinforce particular ways of thinking and acting while excluding other possibilities.

Furthermore, institutions play a role in stabilizing social realities, as their formal structures and processes regulate interactions and provide continuity over time. However, social constructionism recognizes that these structures are not static; rather, they are subject to transformations as meanings and social practices evolve. Institutions must adapt to emerging social realities that arise through the continuous interaction and negotiation among social actors (Gergen, 2007).

In summary, from the perspective of social constructionism, *institutions* are seen as key actors in the construction of social reality. Through their practices and discourses, they not only regulate behavior but also participate in the creation of shared meanings and realities. However, their nature is dynamic and subject to change, making them spaces of constant negotiation of power and meanings.

g) Historical and cultural perspective:

Social constructionism, from a historical and cultural perspective, emphasizes that the ways in which people understand and experience reality are neither fixed nor universal but are deeply rooted in specific historical and cultural contexts. This perspective implies that knowledge, meanings, and social practices are influenced by the historical frameworks and cultural structures prevailing at particular moments. As Berger and Luckmann (2003) argue, reality is socially constructed, meaning that the categories and concepts we use to make sense of the world are products of social interactions that unfold within specific historical contexts.

Social constructionism distances itself from essentialist explanations that attribute the origin of beliefs and values to human nature or scientific progress. Instead, it posits that the ways in which societies construct their realities vary over time and across cultures. Gergen (2007) argues that what is considered universal truths or indisputable knowledge today are, in fact, products of historical processes shaped by specific cultural, economic, and political factors. In this way, social constructionism challenges notions of objectivity and absolute truth, proposing that knowledge is always mediated by social and historical circumstances.

Historically, changes in social conditions have generated new ways of understanding reality. For example, the transition from premodern to modern societies entailed a radical transformation in how people perceived time, space, and social relationships (Giddens, 1996). The emergence of capitalism, industrialization, and the rise of modern science are

historical phenomena that have redefined not only social structures but also the ways in which individuals conceptualize the world. From this perspective, the meanings people attribute to concepts such as work, family, or authority are profoundly influenced by historical changes.

Likewise, the cultural context also plays a crucial role in the construction of reality. Each culture produces its own set of meanings and practices, implying that understandings of identity, gender, morality, or knowledge can vary significantly across different societies (Gergen, 2007). For example, in some cultures, identity is constructed relationally and collectively, whereas in others, a more individualistic view of the "self" prevails. These differences reflect how specific cultural contexts shape the ways in which people experience and make sense of their lives.

In conclusion, the historical and cultural perspective of social constructionism highlights that knowledge and meanings are not universal but rather depend on the historical and cultural contexts in which they develop. This approach underscores the importance of understanding how historical and cultural factors influence the construction of reality and challenges the notions of objectivity and universality in knowledge.

Phenomenology and social constructionism

As previously mentioned, there is an interesting practical relationship between the phenomenological and social constructionist approaches in social work intervention. One could say that phenomenology and social constructionism are like two friends who study how people understand and create their world, but each does so in a different way.

Phenomenology, like one of the friends, is deeply interested in how people feel and directly experience things. It is like when someone closes their eyes and touches something with their hands to understand what it is, relying only on their senses to comprehend it. On the other hand, social constructionism, the other friend, believes that the way the world is understood happens collectively, through conversation and shared ideas. It is like building a sandcastle with a group of friends; the castle would not be the same if built by just one person, because each friend contributes a different and unique part to its structure, making it one of a kind. This, in turn, becomes a unique experience for each member of the group.

So, even though it may seem that these two friends—phenomenology and social constructionism—think differently, they are actually connected. Phenomenology emphasizes that personal experience is essential for understanding the world, while social constructionism highlights that ideas about the world are also shaped through interaction with others. Together, both approaches help explain how each person perceives the world in a unique way, while at the same time, how understanding of the world is built through shared experiences with others.

In the following comparative table, the main points of complementarity between phenomenology and social constructionism are synthesized more clearly:

Aspect	Phenomenology	Social Constructionism
Main approach	Study of consciousness and subjective experience.	Study of social interactions and their impact on the construction of reality.
Theoretical foundation	Focuses on individual experience and the direct perception of phenomena.	It focuses on how realities are constructed through social interactions.
Method	Detailed description of lived experiences to capture the essence of phenomena.	Analysis of interactions and social processes that lead to the construction of knowledge and realities.
Perspective on reality	Considers that reality is revealed through subjective experience and consciousness.	Argues that reality is socially constructed and is the result of social processes.
Contributions	Deepens the understanding of human experience and consciousness.	Provides insights into the influence of social structures on the perception of reality.
Role of culture and language	Important for the way individuals experience and understand the world.	Crucial in the construction and transmission of social reality.
Common interest	Understanding how individuals make sense of their world intersubjectively.	Analysis of how meaning and reality are shared and sustained socially.

This table reflects how, although from different perspectives, both phenomenology and social constructionism are interested in how human beings understand, experience, and construct their world, emphasizing the importance of the social context and interactions in shaping reality and experience.

Derrida's deconstructivist approach

Jacques Derrida's deconstructivist approach has been widely discussed across various disciplines, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. In his key work *De la gramatología* (1986) [Of grammatology], Derrida presents deconstruction as a critical method aimed at dismantling the hierarchies of meaning embedded in texts and discourses. When applied to the sociocultural sphere, this approach allows for the unraveling of how structures of power, ideology, and meaning have been historically configured and how these systems continue to exert influence in contemporary culture.

This thinker does not conceive deconstruction as mere destruction but rather as a way of revealing the internal contradictions within discourses that appear coherent and

unified. In the sociocultural context, this implies a deep analysis of dominant narratives, uncovering the exclusions and marginalizations that such narratives may conceal. For example, in his critique of Western logocentrism, Derrida exposes how Western cultures have historically privileged written language and rational discourse as superior forms of knowledge, subordinating other modes of expression, such as orality or non-Western cultures (Derrida, 1986). This analysis is essential in contemporary socioculture, as it allows for the questioning of the universal assumptions underlying the creation and interpretation of cultural values.

This approach has also been used to analyze how cultural representations are constructed upon hierarchical binaries such as center/periphery, masculine/feminine, civilization/barbarism, etc. These binaries, according to Derrida (1986), are inherently unstable, as each term depends on its opposite for definition, creating a constant tension within the structure of meaning. By applying deconstruction, it becomes possible to reveal how these binaries have sustained unequal power relations and how dominant cultural narratives have marginalized alternative ways of knowing and being in the world.

Différance

The concept of *différance* is central to Derrida's philosophy and constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of his deconstructivist approach. The author introduces this term as a way to subvert the Western metaphysical tradition, which has privileged "presence" as the center of meaning (Derrida, 1982). The term *différance*, which has no direct translation into English or Spanish, plays with the notions of "difference" and "deferral" (*differ* in French means both "to differ" and "to defer") to indicate that meaning is never fixed or fully present but is always displaced and deferred through an endless chain of signs.

Derrida argues that language and meaning function through differential relationships. That is, no sign has an intrinsic or essential meaning; its meaning depends on its relation to other signs. As such, *différance* challenges the idea that meaning can ever be fully present at any given moment. Instead, meaning is always deferred, never entirely accessible or finalized. This deferral is what structures the system of language and the production of meaning, according to the author (Derrida, 1982).

In this sense, as mentioned earlier, Derrida also challenges *logocentrism*, that is, the tendency of Western philosophy to privilege the word as the direct bearer of meaning. *Différance* introduces a fissure in this conception, as it suggests that even when we believe we are in the presence of full or immediate meaning, it is already deferred through a complex play of differences with other meanings. This implies that we never have direct access to meaning; instead, we are always immersed in a continuous process of interpretation and re-signification (Derrida, 1973).

Additionally, *différance* is related to the concept of *trace*, which Derrida uses to describe how meanings always carry the imprint of other meanings. The *trace* signifies that a meaning has been influenced by previous ones and will also influence future meanings, creating a structure in which there is no definitive origin or endpoint. In this context, *différance* is not merely a conceptual tool but an operative principle that guides the production of meaning in language and culture (Derrida, 1986).

Finally, it is important to highlight that Derrida insists that *différance* is not an ontological concept in the traditional sense. It is not an entity or a being; rather, it is a "non-being" or a "non-present" that articulates the space between signs. As such, it challenges the binary categories of being/non-being, presence/absence that have structured Western philosophy, proposing instead a view of language and meaning as open-ended, deferred, and constantly shifting processes (Derrida, 1986).

In conclusion, *différance* is a concept that challenges traditional notions of meaning, presence, and being in Western philosophy. Through this term, Derrida proposes a vision of language and meaning as dynamic and differential processes, in which sense is always displaced and in transformation.

Deconstruction of sociocultural narratives

In this context, Derrida ultimately argues that deconstruction is a critical process that reveals the internal tensions and contradictions within systems of thought (Derrida, 1986). Thus, from this perspective, the deconstruction of dominant sociocultural narratives would involve dismantling dual structures of thought to expose how they sustain power hierarchies and dynamics of domination among people.

A central aspect of the process of deconstructing sociocultural narratives, from this philosophical approach, could be the critique of notions of origin and purity. Derrida argues that any idea claiming to have a clear and defined origin necessarily conceals multiple influences and internal contradictions. In his concept of *différance*, as previously explained, the author points out that the meaning of texts—or, in this case, narratives—is always deferred; that is, it is neither fixed nor stable but constantly changing and dependent on other surrounding meanings (Derrida, 1978). This "difference" between what a narrative explicitly states and what it implies or excludes is where its instability lies.

In the deconstruction of sociocultural narratives, applying Derrida's philosophy, analytical attention could be focused on revealing how these narratives depend on exclusions and silences that are essential for their coherence. Dominant narratives, such as national histories or ideological discourses on identity, often exclude or marginalize certain groups or experiences to maintain their cohesion. Derrida would argue, in this case, that these exclusions are structural and that the meaning of sociocultural narratives is constructed through the negation of the "other."

Finally, Derrida argues that deconstruction is not a process that culminates in a new fixed structure or a new set of meanings. Instead, deconstruction is always open; it is a continuous process of analysis and critique (Derrida, 1978). This implies that sociocultural narratives can never be completely rewritten or reformulated in absolute terms; there will always be new layers of meaning that emerge through the process of reinterpretation. Thus, the deconstruction of narratives does not lead to a definitive truth but rather to a constant openness to new interpretations and possibilities of meaning.

In summary, the application of Derrida's deconstructivist approach to the sociocultural sphere allows for the dismantling of power structures and meanings that shape identities, cultures, and social relationships. Deconstruction reveals the inconsistencies and exclusions underlying hegemonic discourses, offering a critical framework for analyzing

cultural production and contemporary social dynamics.

The hermeneutic approach

The hermeneutic approach, based on hermeneutic methodology, has developed as a crucial perspective in understanding systemic sociocultural dynamics. This approach is rooted in the need to interpret and make sense of human experiences, texts, traditions, and social interactions within a context where meanings are constantly evolving. Hermeneutics is not merely a method of interpretation; it is a dynamic process involving the interaction between the interpreter, the text, and the cultural context, creating a construction of meaning that is intrinsically linked to sociocultural conditions.

Theoretical foundation in hermeneutic methodology

Gadamer's hermeneutic approach is founded on what is known as hermeneutic methodology, his principal contribution in the seminal work *Truth and method* (2004). He develops a philosophical hermeneutics centered on his methodology, which transcends the traditional interpretation of texts to encompass all forms of human experience. According to Gadamer, understanding is not a linear process of decoding predetermined meanings, but an ongoing dialogue between the interpreter and the historical tradition in which they are immersed. This dialogue is what he calls the *fusion of horizons*, where the horizon of the past and that of the present converge, transforming both the interpreter's understanding and the interpreted object.

Martin Heidegger (1993), Gadamer's mentor, also had a significant influence on the development of modern hermeneutics. Heidegger argues that human beings, whom he refers to as *Dasein* (being-there), are always "thrown" into a preexisting context of meanings. This implies that understanding is an ontological act, a way of being in the world. From this perspective, hermeneutic methodology is not merely a set of technical rules but a manifestation of how human beings exist and relate to their surroundings.

Hermeneutic methodology and its sociocultural application

The hermeneutic methodology is characterized by being dialogical and reflective, and it is used to analyze cultural and social phenomena from a perspective that prioritizes contextual interpretation. This methodology enables researchers to understand how individual and collective narratives are constructed, negotiated, and transformed within complex sociocultural systems. According to Gadamer, hermeneutics is based on the *hermeneutic circle*, a process in which the interpretation of the parts of a text or a sociocultural phenomenon is continuously related to the understanding of the whole, and vice versa

(Gadamer, 2004).

This approach is particularly relevant in systemic sociocultural dynamics, as it allows for the unraveling of meaning structures underlying social practices and discourses. As Ricoeur states in his work *Hermeneutics and the human sciences* (2016), hermeneutic interpretation is not merely a technique for reading texts but an act of mediation through which the world of the text is revealed, transforming the reader's understanding. The author introduces the idea that interpretation is a creative act that transforms both the interpreter and the object of study, thereby expanding the ability to comprehend cultural and social phenomena in a richer and more nuanced way.

The importance of tradition and context in hermeneutics

One of the fundamental pillars of the hermeneutic approach is the importance of tradition and cultural context in the formation of meanings. Gadamer emphasizes that tradition is not a barrier to understanding but rather a means through which one accesses truth and participates in a continuous process of interpretation. For the author, tradition is the historical horizon that unconsciously and often implicitly conditions understanding, but it can also be transformed through the act of comprehension (Gadamer, 2004).

From this perspective, sociocultural dynamics are understood as a network of narratives and discourses that are interpreted, reinterpreted, and transformed over time, in accordance with changes in power structures, ideologies, and social practices. Hermeneutics allows for the exploration of how these elements interact, sustain themselves, and sometimes come into conflict, generating transformations in social and cultural systems.

Historically affected consciousness

Gadamer introduces the concept of *historically affected consciousness* as one of the fundamental pillars of his hermeneutic methodology. This concept underscores the idea that every process of interpretation is inevitably influenced by the history and tradition in which the interpreter is immersed. Instead of considering the interpreter as a neutral and objective observer, he presents them as a subject whose perceptions, prejudices, and understandings have been shaped and configured by the historical and cultural context to which they belong (Gadamer, 2004).

The historically affected consciousness implies, under this paradigm, that each individual carries with them a background of experiences, knowledge, and traditions that influence the way they approach a text or phenomenon to be interpreted. This perspective challenges the modern idea that it is possible to achieve a completely objective and influence-free understanding, as it argues that every act of interpretation is conditioned by the effects of history. Gadamer does not see this as a limitation but rather as an inherent condition of the very possibility of understanding. For him, it is precisely through the recognition and acceptance of this historical influence that a richer and deeper interpretation can be achieved (Gadamer, 2004).

The author argues that this *affected consciousness* is, consequently, an inevitable part of the interpretative process, as the interpreter is always engaged in a continuous dialogue with tradition. Interpretation is not an act of applying an objective scientific method but rather a dynamic process in which meaning is constructed through language and enriched by interaction with the historical and cultural context (Cáceres, 2018). This perspective translates into a play of concentric circles where the whole and the parts of the text influence each other, continuously expanding understanding and deepening the sense of the original meaning.

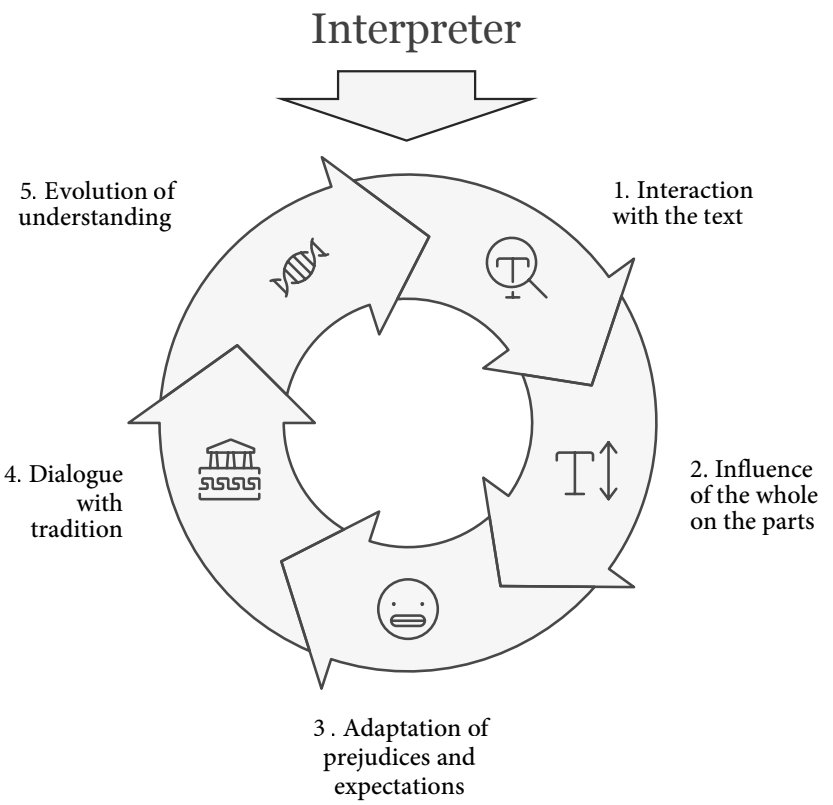
Gadamer emphasizes that true understanding involves recognizing the otherness of the text and tradition, meaning the ability to be open to what the text has to say and to allow it to challenge the interpreter and transform their initial perspective. This approach highlights the importance of dialogue between the past and the present, leading to an interpretative experience that transcends the limits of a technical methodology and becomes a profound and transformative experience.

The hermeneutic circle

The concept of the *hermeneutic circle* is a central idea in the interpretative methodology developed by Gadamer. This concept refers to the continuous and dynamic process of understanding, in which the interpreter constantly moves between the whole and the parts of a text to construct meaning. It holds that it is impossible to fully grasp the meaning of a part of a text without reference to the whole, and vice versa; the whole can only be properly understood through the analysis of its parts (Gadamer, 2004).

In the hermeneutic circle, understanding is not a linear process but rather a spiral that expands with each turn as the dialogue with the text deepens. Each interaction with the text allows for a revision and adjustment of previous interpretations, leading to a more nuanced and enriched comprehension. Gadamer emphasizes that this process involves a constant back-and-forth movement between expectations, preconceptions, and the new interpretations that emerge from the dialogue with the text (Gadamer, 2004).

This concept also challenges the notion that interpretation can be entirely objective and free from influences. According to Gadamer, people generally approach a text with certain preconceptions or biases, which are not necessarily negative but serve as the foundation upon which individuals achieve understanding. As they immerse themselves in the interpretative process, these preconceptions are constantly questioned and reformulated in response to what the text communicates to them (Gadamer, 2004).


Interpreter
1. Interaction with the text
2. Influence of the whole on the parts
3 . Adaptation of prejudices and expectations
4. Dialogue with tradition
5. Evolution of understanding

The hermeneutic circle, therefore, is not merely a mechanical exchange of information between the whole and its parts, but rather a living dialogue that is enriched with each iteration (Gadamer, 2004). It emphasizes the importance of maintaining openness to the otherness of the text, meaning being willing to be transformed by what the text has to convey. This attitude of openness and readiness for change is what allows the hermeneutic process to be a genuine encounter with meaning, where both the interpreter and the text mutually influence each other.

Critical reflections and contributions to the study of culture

The hermeneutic methodology has been criticized for its apparent subjectivity, as it emphasizes the role of the interpreter and the context in the construction of meanings. However, this critique can also be seen as a strength, as it acknowledges the inherently interpretative nature of human knowledge and its dependence on historical and cultural context. As Gadamer explains, the goal of hermeneutics is not to eliminate the interpreter's prejudice but to become aware of it and use it as a resource for understanding (Gadamer, 2004).

Moreover, contemporary authors such as Richard Kearney (2002) have expanded the application of the hermeneutic approach to ethical and political issues, highlighting its

potential to mediate cultural conflicts and promote intercultural dialogue. This dimension of hermeneutics is crucial for addressing contemporary challenges such as globalization, migration, and intercultural tensions, where mutual understanding and the construction of shared meanings are essential for peaceful and equitable coexistence.

Consequently, the hermeneutic approach, based on Gadamer's hermeneutic methodology, offers a powerful tool for analyzing systemic sociocultural dynamics. Through its emphasis on contextual interpretation, tradition, and the dialogue between the interpreter and the object of study, hermeneutics enables a deep and nuanced understanding of the structures of meaning underlying social and cultural practices. Its relevance lies not only in its capacity to interpret texts but also in its potential to transform the understanding of sociocultural phenomena and contribute to intercultural dialogue and mediation.

Foucaultian knowledge-power approach

This approach is based on the work of Michel Foucault (1926-1984), a French philosopher, historian, and social theorist known for his influential studies on the relationships between power, knowledge, and subjectivity. His work spans a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, psychology, and history, marking a turning point in the development of the social sciences. Foucault introduced key concepts such as biopolitics, knowledge-power, and governmentality, which explore how social and political institutions regulate individuals' lives through discourses and practices of control. By challenging traditional notions of power, which viewed it solely as repressive, Foucault demonstrated how power is also productive, shaping subjects, knowledge, and social norms. His approach has been fundamental in rethinking the role of institutions and the dynamics of power in modern society, remaining a central reference in contemporary debates on freedom, ethics, and social control within the social sciences.

Power-knowledge

As previously stated, Foucault's *power-knowledge* approach is a fundamental aspect of social constructionism at a philosophical level. In this regard, it is essential to begin by explaining that Foucault argues in his analysis that knowledge and power are intrinsically intertwined and cannot be understood as separate spheres. Unlike traditional conceptions, which tend to see power as something exercised from above through coercion and domination, Foucault introduces a more dispersed and productive notion of power. In his approach, power is not only exercised by institutions or figures of authority but is also present in everyday social relations and manifests through multiple practices and discourses (Foucault, 2003, 2012).

One of the central elements of Foucault's approach is that power is not merely repressive but also productive. That is, power does not only restrict or control individuals; it also produces knowledge, norms, and truths that shape social reality. Foucault argues that there can be no knowledge without a relationship of power, as all knowledge is embedded

within power structures that legitimize and shape it. Thus, regimes of truth—what a society considers to be true or false—are closely linked to how power is organized and distributed. In *Vigilar y castigar* (2003) [Discipline and punish], Foucault demonstrates how disciplinary institutions, such as prisons and schools, not only control individuals but also produce knowledge about behavior, morality, and normality, which in turn legitimizes these very institutions.

In this sense, the concept of "power-knowledge" developed by Foucault refers to the way in which knowledge and power mutually reinforce each other. Knowledge is never neutral; it is always linked to interests and power structures. A clear example of this interaction is the medical field, where health sciences not only describe and treat conditions but also establish norms regarding what is considered "normal" and "pathological." In this way, medical discourse becomes a vehicle for social regulation, shaping behaviors and subjectivities in accordance with the imperatives of power (Foucault, 2007).

For Foucault, power circulates and manifests itself in a capillary manner, meaning that it does not reside solely in major state structures or institutions but operates at all levels of society. In his analysis of the *panopticon*, inspired by Bentham, Foucault demonstrates how constant surveillance creates subjects who self-regulate, internalizing the behavioral norms that power seeks to impose. Here, knowledge about individuals, generated through observation and categorization, becomes a key tool for exercising control. This control is neither violent nor explicit; rather, it is subtle and operates through the normalization of behaviors (Foucault, 2007).

Finally, the *power-knowledge* approach allows for an understanding that power does not merely oppress but also creates possibilities for resistance. As Foucault points out, where there is power, there is also resistance, since the very dynamics of power that produce knowledge and norms also generate spaces for individuals to challenge, question, or subvert these orders. For the author, power relations are present in all human interactions and should not be confused with domination. Power, in this sense, can be fluid, reversible, and negotiable between individuals. However, when these power relations become fixed and one party holds total control over the other, what Foucault calls a *state of domination* emerges. In such cases, the possibilities for exercising freedom are extremely limited or nonexistent (Foucault, 1984, 2009).

This is one of the most significant aspects of Foucault's thought, as it highlights people's capacity to transform their social realities, even within contexts of domination.

Biopolitics and the control of populations

The concept of *biopolitics* is another central theme in Foucault's philosophy, referring to the strategies and mechanisms through which power regulates human life in its biological dimension. Unlike classical forms of power that are exercised over individual bodies through discipline, biopolitics focuses on the management of populations. Foucault explains that, starting in the 18th century, states began to concern themselves with issues related to public health, birth rates, mortality, and life expectancy. These mechanisms of biopolitical control rely on scientific knowledge about human life, enabling the state and other institutions to manage bodies and lives more effectively (Foucault, 2009).

This concept is key to understanding how power is not only manifested through violence or coercion but also through the regulation of fundamental biological aspects such as reproduction, public health, and birth policies. "Biopolitics", therefore, represents a more subtle yet equally powerful form of control that enables intervention in the most intimate aspects of life (Foucault, 2012).

Governmentality and power as a practice of governance

The concept of *governmentality*, developed by Foucault, refers to the ways in which power is organized and exercised in the administration of populations. While biopolitics focuses on bodies and life, governmentality pertains to the "conduct of conduct" through a series of techniques and strategies aimed at guiding the actions of individuals and populations. In this sense, power is not only exercised through explicit laws or norms but also through the regulation of behaviors via policies, economies, and knowledge (Foucault, 1991b).

This approach highlights how the modern state has evolved into more complex forms of governance, where power is exercised through the management of social issues such as poverty, education, and health (Foucault, 2012). Governmentality demonstrates that power is not exercised exclusively through prohibition or repression but rather through the creation of conditions that induce individuals to behave in specific ways.

Disciplinarity and panopticism

The concept of *disciplinarity* is crucial for understanding power in Foucault's thought. According to Foucault, disciplinarity is a form of power exercised through techniques aimed at controlling and shaping individuals' bodies and minds to make them more productive and docile. This form of power is particularly evident in institutions such as prisons, schools, hospitals, and military barracks, where individuals are subjected to constant surveillance and the normalization of behaviors (Foucault, 2003).

Panopticism, inspired by Bentham's architectural design of the panopticon, is a metaphor that Foucault uses to describe how surveillance becomes an efficient tool of power. In the panopticon, individuals are observed without knowing when they are being watched, leading them to internalize surveillance and modify their behavior according to imposed norms. This disciplinary system becomes a subtle yet effective form of power, as individuals self-regulate due to the possibility of being observed.

The discourse and discursive formations

The analysis of discourse is another fundamental pillar in Foucault's philosophy. For him, discourse is not merely a form of expression but a field in which power and

knowledge relations are constituted. These types of narratives are not neutral; on the contrary, they are imbued with power because they establish what can be said, who has the right to speak, and what is considered true or false in a given context (Foucault, 2002).

Discursive formations are systems of rules that determine what kind of knowledge is possible at a given moment. As previously mentioned, a classic example from Foucault on this matter is that of medicine and psychiatry, used to demonstrate how certain discourses impose themselves as truths, thereby shaping not only medical practice but also the way people are categorized as healthy or ill, normal or abnormal. In this way, these types of discursive narratives do not merely describe reality but actively shape it.

Archaeology of knowledge and genealogy of power

Foucault employs two methodological approaches to analyze the relationships between power and knowledge: archaeology and genealogy. Archaeology is a method that seeks to uncover the underlying structures that have enabled the formation of certain bodies of knowledge at specific historical moments. In his book *La arqueología del saber* (2002) [The archaeology of knowledge], Foucault explains how systems of thought change over time and how each era has its own criteria for determining what is considered valid knowledge.

On the other hand, genealogy is a historical method that investigates the origins and developments of systems of power and knowledge. Inspired by Nietzsche, Foucault uses genealogy to show that social practices and bodies of knowledge are not natural or universal but rather historical products that have emerged through struggles for power (Foucault, 2004, 2012). An example of this approach can be seen in his work *Vigilar y castigar* (2003) [Discipline and punish], where Foucault analyzes how forms of punishment and social control have evolved from the medieval era to the modern age, uncovering the underlying power dynamics behind these changes.

The subject and subjectivation

Finally, Foucault introduces a conception of the *subject* that challenges traditional perspectives in Western philosophy, particularly those that portray it as an autonomous, free entity that preexists power. Instead of viewing the individual as an independent agent acting outside social structures, Foucault argues that the subject is a product of the knowledge and power relations that shape it. This process, which he calls *subjectivation*, implies that individuals are not only influenced by power but are also constituted by it (Foucault, 1991a).

From this perspective, the identity of subjects and their experience of themselves are neither natural nor essential; rather, they are shaped through discourses, institutions, and social practices. Systems of power—such as educational, religious, medical, legal, and penitentiary institutions—generate forms of knowledge that categorize and define individuals. In turn, individuals internalize these discourses and norms, shaping their own subjectivities (Foucault, 1991a).

The notion of subjectivation also highlights that power is not exercised solely through repression or external coercion; rather, it operates from within the subject. Social norms are internalized, and individuals begin to govern themselves according to the standards established by power. This is what Foucault calls disciplinary power, a form of control that does not require a visible authority or explicit punishments because individuals self-regulate based on social expectations (Foucault, 1991a, 1995).

Subjectivation, therefore, implies that individuals are constantly produced and reproduced by systems of power-knowledge, which dismantles the notion of a free, autonomous, and sovereign subject. Instead, the subject is the result of complex interactions between discourses, practices, and forms of power that define what it means to be an individual in a given society. Thus, the subject is a historical and social construct, an entity that changes and transforms according to shifts in knowledge-power relations (Foucault, 1991a).

However, Foucault does not view this process of subjectivation as entirely negative or deterministic. In his later work, particularly in his study of ethics and the techniques of the self, Foucault explores how individuals can resist the forms of power that constitute them and develop new forms of subjectivity. Although power shapes subjects, there are also spaces for resistance, allowing individuals to reconfigure themselves through practices of freedom that challenge dominant norms and discourses (Foucault, 1984).

In summary, Foucault's *theory of the subject* challenges traditional philosophical notions of freedom and autonomy. The subject is not a fixed entity that preexists power but is formed through the relations of knowledge and power that define who we are and how we understand ourselves. This process of subjectivation is at the core of Foucault's investigations into how modern societies govern individuals, not only through coercion but also by producing subjectivities that internalize social norms.

Gramscian hegemonic power approach

The hegemonic power approach developed by Antonio Gramsci constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of contemporary critical thought in sociopolitical and cultural analysis. Gramsci, an Italian Marxist theorist, introduces the concept of "hegemony" to refer to the ability of a dominant social class to establish and maintain its leadership over other classes not only through coercion but also by obtaining consensus.

Unlike domination exercised exclusively through coercive or repressive means, the hegemony proposed by Gramsci (1981a) involves a more subtle and profound form of control, where the ruling class not only imposes its will but also ensures that it is perceived as legitimate and, in many cases, desirable by subordinate classes. This consensus is generated and sustained primarily within the realm of culture and ideology, allowing the ruling class to naturalize its control and present its interests as those of society as a whole.

Cultural hegemony, therefore, operates as a process through which dominant ideas and values become embedded in the social fabric, infiltrating key institutions such as education, the media, religion, and social organizations, making the established order appear unquestionable, normal, and even inevitable. In this way, hegemony ensures that the power

of the ruling class is accepted not only at the institutional or political level but also in everyday life, shaping how individuals perceive their reality and their position within it.

1. Hegemony and consensus

The concept of hegemony and consensus in Gramsci's theory is one of the most influential pillars in his analysis of power and domination in modern societies. For the author, hegemony is a form of power exercised not only through coercion or violence, as traditionally understood in power theories, but primarily through the construction of consensus among social classes. This consensus is generated through ideological and cultural mechanisms that enable subordinate classes to accept, relatively passively, the leadership and direction of the dominant class (Gramsci, 1981a, 1981b).

Consensus as a form of domination

Consensus in Gramscian theory refers to the ability of the ruling class to convince subordinate classes that its particular interests are, in fact, the general interests of society as a whole. Gramsci observes that this process is neither forced nor violently imposed but occurs through a process of persuasion and legitimation. Civil society institutions, such as the church, schools, media, and cultural organizations, play a crucial role in creating this consensus. Through these institutions, ideas, values, and beliefs that reinforce the domination of the ruling class are disseminated, presenting the *status quo* as natural and inevitable (Gramsci, 1981b).

This type of power is more subtle and profound than mere control through coercion because it operates at the level of ideas and beliefs, internalizing power within the minds of the dominated. Thus, subordinate classes are not only forced to accept the leadership of the ruling class but do so voluntarily, believing that it is in the best interest of the common good. Gramsci asserts that hegemony is expressed both in intellectual and moral leadership as well as in political and economic domination (Gramsci, 1981b). This idea of intellectual and moral leadership is central to understanding how consensus is constructed within hegemony.

Hegemony and civil society

The key to the concept of consensus lies in the role of civil society. For Gramsci, civil society consists of the institutions and organizations that mediate between the individual and the state, such as churches, unions, educational associations, and the media. Unlike the state, which is responsible for coercion, civil society is the space where hegemonic consensus is formed—that is, where the ideas of the ruling class are accepted as the "common" ideas of the entire society (Gramsci, 1981b). In other words, hegemony is not sustained solely through control of the state's coercive apparatus but depends on the ruling class's ability to control the production and dissemination of ideas within civil society.

Gramsci also distinguishes between the state, which exercises direct coercion, and civil society, which serves as the space where consensus is constructed. This distinction is

fundamental, as it highlights that hegemony is not solely a matter of political or economic control but also involves cultural and ideological dominance. Hegemony is maintained not only because the ruling class possesses economic and military resources but also because it successfully establishes a historical bloc—that is, an alliance among various social forces that share its worldview (Gramsci, 1981b).

The process of consensus building

Gramsci emphasizes that consensus is not something achieved once and for all, but rather something that must be constantly renewed and recreated. Hegemony is a dynamic process that requires continuous effort from the ruling class to maintain its leadership. This involves an ongoing negotiation between the ruling class and the subordinate classes, who, while largely accepting dominant leadership, may also resist and attempt to develop their own forms of critical consciousness and counter-hegemony (Gramsci, 1981b).

Furthermore, Gramsci introduces the idea that hegemony is always partial and incomplete. There can never be absolute consensus, as there will always be sectors of society that resist or question the dominant leadership. Therefore, hegemony involves a constant struggle to maintain consensus, while subordinate classes may seek to build a "counter-hegemony" that challenges and replaces the dominant system of values and beliefs (Gramsci, 1999).

Hegemony and cultural revolution

Gramsci, inspired by Marxism, believed that for a revolution to be successful, it needed not only a change in economic and political structures but also a transformation in the cultural sphere. For him, the revolutionary process involved the creation of a new hegemony capable of challenging and dismantling the hegemony of the ruling class. This could only be achieved through what Gramsci called a "war of position," a prolonged and complex struggle that not only encompassed the seizure of political power but also the transformation of cultural and educational institutions, which are fundamental in the production of consensus (Gramsci, 1981b, 1999).

In summary, the concept of consensus within Gramscian hegemony provides a framework for understanding how power operates on multiple levels within a society—not only through direct coercion but also through ideology and culture. The ruling class maintains its power not merely through economic control but through its ability to intellectually and morally lead society as a whole. This analysis remains relevant for understanding forms of domination and resistance in the contemporary world, where ideas and cultural narratives play a crucial role in legitimizing or contesting power.

2. Structure and superstructure

The concept of *structure* and *superstructure* in Gramsci's work is a reinterpretation and expansion of the classical Marxist theoretical framework, emphasizing the interrela-

tion between economic foundations and the ideological and cultural forms that shape society. Gramsci employs these terms to describe how economic and social relations (structure) interact with institutions and cultural practices (superstructure) in the formation and perpetuation of hegemonic power. This distinction is crucial for understanding how power is maintained in modern societies and how the ruling class not only controls the material means of production but also the production and legitimization of ideas and values (Gramsci, 1981b, 1984, 1986, 1999).

The structure: economic base

In traditional Marxist theory, the structure, or base, refers to the fundamental economic relations of a society, that is, the way production and the exchange of goods and services are organized. Karl Marx argued that the relations of production (whether capitalist or feudal, for example) largely determined the organization of society, including its political, legal, and cultural institutions (Marx, 2008b). For Gramsci, the structure remains fundamental, as it describes the material conditions on which the domination of one class over another is based. The ruling class, which controls the means of production, has the ability to direct and structure economic life, and this economic leadership provides a solid foundation for its control over other spheres of social life.

However, Gramsci also goes beyond classical Marxist economic determinism, arguing that the structure does not automatically determine the superstructure. While the economic base is crucial, it must be articulated through the superstructure to ensure hegemony, introducing a more dynamic and dialectical approach between the two spheres (Gramsci, 1981b, 1984).

The superstructure: ideology, culture, and politics

The superstructure, in the classical Marxist view, encompasses all those institutions, practices, ideas, and beliefs that arise from the economic base of society. This includes the legal system, political institutions, forms of social consciousness, education, the media, and culture in general. In other words, the superstructure is the set of non-economic structures that legitimize and sustain the dominant relations of production. For Marx, the superstructure, although influenced by the economic base, has a relative autonomy and can, in turn, influence the economic structure in a dialectical process (Marx, 2008a).

Gramsci adopts this idea but assigns greater significance to the superstructure, arguing that hegemony cannot be sustained solely through control of the economic structure but largely depends on the ideological and cultural control exerted through the superstructure (Gramsci, 1984). It is here that the author introduces his concept of cultural hegemony, suggesting that the ruling class cannot maintain its power merely through economic or political coercion but must construct a cultural hegemony in which its worldview is accepted as the dominant or "natural" perspective for society as a whole (Gramsci, 1981a).

The superstructure, then, becomes the space where consensus is negotiated and constructed. The institutions of the superstructure, such as educational systems, churches, media, and cultural institutions, are essential for the dissemination of ideas and values that legitimize the existing social order. The ruling class's ability to control these institutions

and ensure that its ideas are perceived as universal is what Gramsci calls "moral and intellectual leadership" (Gramsci, 1981b, 1986).

Structure, superstructure, and the expanded state

One of Gramsci's most significant contributions to classical Marxist theory is his concept of the "expanded state," which incorporates both structure and superstructure. For Gramsci, the state is not limited solely to institutions of coercive power (such as the government, the police, and the military); it also includes civil society institutions, such as the media, churches, and schools, which are crucial for the production of consensus (Gramsci, 1981a, 1981b, 1984).

Gramsci divides the state into two levels: the *coercive state*, which includes institutions that exert direct control over individuals (army, police, courts), and civil society, which refers to the institutions where hegemonic consensus is produced and reproduced. Through this distinction, the author argues that the power of the ruling class is not sustained solely through the use of force but also through the creation of a cultural hegemony that makes the existing social order appear natural and inevitable. This consensus is achieved and maintained within civil society, through the superstructure, while coercion serves as the state's last resort when consensus is insufficient to sustain social control (Gramsci, 1981a, 1981b, 1984).

Dialectical relationship between structure and superstructure

One of the key ideas in Gramsci's interpretation of structure and superstructure is that they do not operate separately or in isolation but are in a constant dialectical relationship. The economic structure influences cultural and political institutions, but these, in turn, can also affect the economic structure. Gramsci emphasizes that hegemony is not established unilaterally; rather, it is a continuous process of negotiation and struggle between social classes. Subordinate classes, although influenced by the dominant hegemony, have the capacity to resist and construct their own counter-hegemonic forms of consciousness and cultural organization (Gramsci, 1981b, 1984).

This dialectical approach allows Gramsci to overcome the simplistic economic determinism that characterized some traditional Marxist interpretations. For Gramsci, political struggle takes place both in the economic structure and in the ideological superstructure, and the success of a revolutionary project requires gaining ground in both spheres. It is not enough to change material conditions; it is also necessary to transform the ideas and cultural institutions that sustain and legitimize the existing order (Gramsci, 1984).

3. Role of intellectuals

Lastly, the role of intellectuals, according to the author, is fundamental to understanding how hegemony is constructed, maintained, and challenged in society. Gramsci introduces a much broader and more dynamic conception of the intellectual than the tra-

ditional one, recognizing that intellectuals are not merely individuals dedicated to the production of ideas in an academic context but key actors in shaping hegemonic power and the struggle for ideological and cultural control. Through his analysis, the author highlights the function of intellectuals as mediators between the ruling and subordinate classes and as active agents in the creation and dissemination of the ideological consensus that sustains hegemony (Gramsci, 1981a).

Expanded definition of intellectual

For Gramsci, the term "intellectual" is not limited to individuals with academic or professional roles in the production of knowledge, such as philosophers, scientists, or artists. Rather, any individual who plays an organizing or leadership role in society can be considered an intellectual (Gramsci, 1981a, 1981b). This definition includes not only traditional knowledge professionals but also those who, in various fields, contribute to the dissemination and legitimization of the dominant class's ideas, such as journalists, teachers, bureaucrats, clergy, and even union and political leaders.

Gramsci points out that all men are intellectuals; however, not all have the *function* of intellectuals in society. This means that all individuals possess intellectual capacities, but only some fulfill the specific role of producing, organizing, or disseminating ideas in the social sphere (Gramsci, 1981a, 1981b, 1984). Therefore, intellectuals are those who participate in the creation and reproduction of common sense and the dominant ideology, and they are not necessarily associated with formal education or academia.

Traditional intellectuals and organic intellectuals

In this regard, the author introduces two important categories of intellectuals: traditional intellectuals and organic intellectuals. This distinction is key to understanding, from this perspective, how hegemony is reproduced and how it can be challenged.

- **Traditional intellectuals:** These intellectuals are associated with the perpetuation of the status quo and are often linked to established professional sectors, such as academics, theologians, or cultural officials. Gramsci describes them as those who see themselves as independent of social struggles and who tend to hold positions of authority within society. However, Gramsci argues that their supposed neutrality is an illusion, as they are usually at the service of the dominant classes, helping to maintain and legitimize the existing social order (Gramsci, 1986, 1999). These traditional intellectuals perceive themselves as bearers of universal knowledge, but in reality, they are embedded within power relations that legitimize the hegemony of a particular social class.

- **Organic intellectuals:** Unlike traditional intellectuals, organic intellectuals emerge directly from a specific social class and are deeply connected to its interests and needs. According to the author, every social class produces its own organic intellectuals, whose primary function is to organize, articulate, and disseminate the ideas and values of their class (Gramsci, 1986, 1999). Organic intellectuals not only interpret reality from the perspective of their class but also act as leaders in the

organization and direction of political and social struggles. For example, in the case of the working class, organic intellectuals may arise from trade unions, social movements, or community organizations.

For Gramsci, the role of organic intellectuals is crucial in the creation of a counter-hegemony—a set of ideas and values that challenge the dominant hegemony. Through their activity, these intellectuals contribute to the development of critical consciousness among subordinate classes and the articulation of an alternative political project.

Intellectuals and hegemony

Based on the above, it can be inferred that within the framework of Gramsci's theory of hegemony, intellectuals play a central role in producing the consensus that enables the dominant class to maintain its power. Gramsci emphasizes that hegemony is not sustained solely through political or military coercion but through the dissemination of a worldview that is presented as universal and natural for all social classes. This process of legitimization is primarily carried out by intellectuals, who act as the "constructors" of hegemony.

Intellectuals, therefore, are responsible for creating what Gramsci refers to as "common sense," that is, the set of ideas and beliefs accepted without question by the majority of society (Gramsci, 1999). This common sense is not necessarily coherent or rational, but it plays a key role in the perpetuation of hegemony, as it provides an explanation of the world that validates existing power structures. Intellectuals of the dominant class, through education, the media, and other cultural institutions, produce and disseminate this common sense, making their values and interests appear as the interests of all.

The construction of counter-hegemony

While for Gramsci intellectuals are a key piece in the creation and maintenance of hegemonic consensus, he also recognizes that they play a crucial role in the construction of a counter-hegemony, that is, an alternative worldview that challenges and questions the dominant hegemony. For the author, the organic intellectuals of the subaltern classes can play a decisive role in this process by creating new forms of critical consciousness and political organization that promote the interests of the oppressed (Gramsci, 1999).

The construction of a counter-hegemony involves a war of position, in which the subaltern classes not only struggle for political and economic power but also for control over culture and ideology (Gramsci, 1999). In this context, organic intellectuals must be capable of formulating a new "moral and intellectual direction" that enables the subaltern classes to articulate their own interests and develop a coherent, rational, and unified vision of society that challenges the dominant hegemony.

Gramsci also emphasizes the importance of the "cultural revolution" in this process. For him, the transformation of political and economic structures must be accompanied by a cultural and ideological shift. In this sense, organic intellectuals are responsible for developing a new way of thinking that can mobilize the subordinate classes and break away from the common sense imposed by the dominant class (Gramsci, 1999).

Intersectional approach

The theory of intersectionality is a philosophical approach that emerged in the late 1980s in the United States, within a context of growing attention to civil rights struggles and feminist movements. Formally, the term intersectionality was first coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, an African American scholar and activist, in her influential article *Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex*, published that same year. The author introduced the concept to illustrate how Black women faced forms of oppression that could not be understood solely through the singular categories of "gender" or "race," but rather required an approach that integrated multiple dimensions of discrimination.

Notwithstanding the above, this theoretical section will reveal that the concept of "intersectionality," as interpreted by its leading exponents, goes beyond merely being an addition of oppressions; rather, it is a profound analytical framework that allows for the unraveling of the latent complexity within structures of power and sociocultural inequality.

Origin and developmen

As previously mentioned, this theoretical concept was coined by Crenshaw (1989), who analyzed how African American women in the United States experienced inequalities that could not be understood through approaches that operated along a single axis, such as racism or sexism in isolation. Crenshaw pointed out that treating these categories independently rendered invisible the particular experiences of dark-skinned women, who faced simultaneously interrelated forms of discrimination. This theoretical framework emerged as a critique of both hegemonic feminist theory, which tended to focus on the experiences of women with more Western characteristics, and the anti-racist movement, which prioritized the experiences of African American men.

Building on these initial formulations, the intersectional approach has evolved thanks to contributions from various scholars who have expanded its applicability and scope. In particular, Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2019) developed the concept in greater depth, arguing that intersectionality is both a theoretical and methodological framework. Collins and Bilge emphasize that intersectionality is not limited to the study of inequalities but should also be understood as a praxis oriented toward social justice, as it allows for the analysis of the interactions between various power structures that perpetuate inequalities (Collins & Bilge, 2019).

Main exponents of the approach

As mentioned earlier, in addition to Kimberlé Crenshaw—the pioneer in introducing the concept—authors such as Patricia Hill Collins and Angela Davis have been fundamental in the consolidation and deepening of the intersectional approach. Patricia Hill Collins, for instance, has extensively worked on the idea of the "matrix of domination," where different axes of oppression intersect and must be understood as interrelated and

mutually constitutive (Collins & Bilge, 2019). Angela Davis (2018), on the other hand, has explored the interrelation between race, gender, and class, particularly in the context of the history of African American women and the struggle for civil rights in the United States.

Other significant contributions include the work of María Zabala and Geydis Fundora (2022), who have explored the potential of intersectionality as a critical tool for social policy formulation, addressing the complexity of inequalities in education and other social spheres in Latin America. Through their studies, intersectionality is reinterpreted and adapted to analyze not only gender and racial inequalities but also structural inequalities linked to the coloniality of power.

Theoretical postulates of intersectionality

In its purest essence, "intersectionality" holds that social categories such as gender, race, class, and sexuality are not isolated entities that can be understood independently, but rather intersect and influence each other. This intersection generates unique experiences of oppression and privilege that cannot be reduced to the isolated study of each category. As Collins and Bilge (2019) point out, these categories not only intersect but also produce new forms of inequality and enable new opportunities for resistance and agency. Intersectionality, therefore, is not limited solely to describing the coexistence of multiple identities; it also analyzes how these configurations produce complex mechanisms of subordination and privilege, which are articulated at both micro and macro levels and manifest in everyday practices as well as in institutional and systemic structures.

A crucial aspect of intersectional theory is its commitment to social justice. Intersectionality, beyond being an academic analytical framework, constitutes a tool aimed at transforming power structures. This commitment is reflected in the works of Davis, who emphasizes the importance of *praxis* within social activism. In this sense, intersectionality is not only about understanding inequalities but also about promoting substantial social change. *Intersectional praxis* involves recognizing how power relations operate simultaneously on different scales and how resistance practices can be situated and specific, based on the interrelation of factors such as community, place, and history (Davis, 2018). In this way, the intersectional approach does not merely aspire to describe oppressive realities but also seeks to transform them, identifying effective intervention points that allow for the reconfiguration of power relations and the promotion of equity.

Mara Viveros (2023), for her part, highlights that intersectionality, when applied from a *decolonial perspective*, allows for an examination of the power structures that perpetuate social exclusion in Latin America. This adaptation of intersectionality underscores the importance of situating analysis within specific historical and social contexts, integrating a critique of coloniality, which manifests in the discrimination against racialized populations and the persistence of ethno-racial hierarchies. Furthermore, the decolonial perspective enables intersectionality to be connected with the historical struggles of oppressed peoples in Latin America, making visible how power hierarchies are not only shaped by contemporary factors but are also the result of historical processes linked to coloniality and economic exploitation. In this sense, decolonial intersectionality aims not only at critical analysis but also at the subversion of these structures through the articulation of social

movements and the promotion of a truly inclusive and reparative justice.

The matrix of domination

The *matrix of domination* is a foundational concept within intersectionality studies, particularly in the work of Patricia Hill Collins (2019). This analytical framework enables the exploration of the interconnections between various forms of social inequality, such as racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and classism, as interdependent structures that shape human experiences across different levels and social contexts. Rather than merely being an accumulation of oppressions, the matrix of domination emphasizes how these forms of oppression intersect and reinforce one another, creating complex and multifaceted power hierarchies.

The matrix of domination conceptualizes power as an interconnected network that organizes and legitimizes social inequalities. Collins emphasizes that categories such as race, gender, class, and sexuality do not operate in isolation or in a static manner; rather, they are configured within specific social relationships that reflect and perpetuate systems of privilege and subordination (Collins & Bilge, 2019). This interdisciplinary approach allows for the transcendence of one-dimensional analyses to address the complexity of social phenomena.

Dimensions of power

Collins and Bilge (2019) delineate four interconnected dimensions of power that structure the matrix of domination, encompassing the interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels:

1. **Interpersonal power:** This level addresses everyday interactions where power dynamics are manifested and reproduced. Microaggressions, stereotypes, and prejudices function as mechanisms that perpetuate inequalities within social relationships (Collins & Bilge, 2019). Although these expressions may seem trivial, their accumulation reinforces broader narratives of subordination.

2. **Disciplinary power:** This refers to institutional systems that manage and regulate inequalities through norms, practices, and policies. According to the authors, educational, judicial, and labor institutions not only reflect structural inequalities but also perpetuate them through discriminatory practices and exclusionary criteria. This level examines how individuals' lives are shaped by these disciplinary structures (Collins & Bilge, 2019).

3. **Cultural power:** This dimension explores the narratives, values, and discourses that legitimize social hierarchies. Media and cultural representations serve as spaces where collective imaginaries are constructed, reinforcing existing power relations (Collins & Bilge, 2019). For example, racial and gender stereotypes in film or advertising can naturalize inequalities by presenting these categories as inherent

or inevitable.

4. **Structural power:** This encompasses organizational hierarchies and political and economic institutions that consolidate systemic inequalities. For the authors, this level includes the organization of the capitalist system, the state apparatus, and global power relations. Collins and Bilge highlight how these structures shape individuals' and groups' possibilities for action, either limiting or facilitating their access to resources, rights, and opportunities (Collins & Bilge, 2019).

Interdependence of dimensions

This principle highlights how power dynamics do not function in isolation but rather interact to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege (Collins & Bilge, 2019). For instance, a Black woman may face interpersonal discrimination based on racism and sexism while also encountering disciplinary barriers in the labor market, negative cultural stereotypes, and structural inequalities that limit her access to higher education and healthcare.

Intersectionality: Beyond feminism and antiracism

Although *intersectionality* originally emerged within the context of feminist and anti-racist struggles, its application is not limited exclusively to these fields. Intersectionality is also used to address other forms of inequality and oppression, including social class, ability, sexuality, and age. For example, Wilchins' work (2019) examines how gender norms and representations of masculinity and femininity are influenced by factors such as race and class, demonstrating that categories of oppression are constantly intertwined in everyday life.

Furthermore, Wilchins argues that gender stereotypes are socially constructed and intersect differently depending on the cultural context, generating specific forms of oppression that remain invisible if not analyzed from an intersectional perspective. This type of analysis allows for transcending conventional categories of feminism and racism, exploring how gender expectations and economic inequality are deeply interrelated (Wilchins, 2019).

In the work *Interseccionalidad: Desigualdades, lugares y emociones* (2021) [Intersectionality: Inequalities, places and emotions], author María Rodó-Zárate addresses intersectional dynamics through an approach that considers both social inequalities and the emotions associated with places and everyday experiences. This analysis examines how emotions and physical space interact with social positions, exploring how individuals experience well-being or discomfort depending on their positions of power and oppression in specific contexts.

Rodó-Zárate introduces the concept of *Relief Maps* as a methodological tool that allows for the visualization of intersectional experiences of well-being and discomfort. These "maps" offer a subjective representation of how different bodies experience space and emotions, proposing that privilege and oppression manifest not only in material conditions but also in how individuals live and perceive their surroundings. The author delves

into the concept of the "intersectional wound", which defines the pain and emotional contradiction that arise when a person is oppressed in one axis (e.g., gender) while being privileged in another (e.g., race). This approach emphasizes that intersectionality involves not only multiple forms of oppression but also an emotional and political entanglement that calls for an ethics of care in managing differences and recognizing privileges (Rodó-Zárate, 2021).

The author also proposes a classification of discomforts (*systemic, circumstantial, and ethical*) and well-being (*systemic, relief, and normalizing*) to explore how emotions reflect or reinforce structural inequalities (Rodó-Zárate, 2021). These concepts encourage viewing emotions not as isolated individual experiences but as manifestations of power structures and social dynamics that shape relationships and the spaces people inhabit.

Ultimately, the theoretical framework of intersectionality emerges as a response to the insufficiency of traditional approaches in addressing the complexity of inequalities. Through the contributions of multiple interdisciplinary scholars, intersectionality has become a powerful tool for analyzing how social categories intertwine and generate unique experiences of discrimination and privilege. Its application transcends the boundaries of feminism and anti-racism, demonstrating its relevance in understanding and transforming a wide range of social and structural inequalities across different global and local contexts.

Sen's social justice approach

Sen's approach to *social justice* focuses on the concept of *capabilities*, which represents a critique of traditional theories of justice based on the distribution of resources or utilities. Sen (2009) challenges the purely distributive view of justice, arguing that it is not enough to provide equal resources or income to all individuals; rather, it is essential to consider what people can actually do or achieve with those resources. According to the author, true social justice involves expanding the freedoms and opportunities that enable individuals to lead the lives they value and have reason to value.

Thus, Sen's capability approach emphasizes individual differences, as people with the same resources may have different capabilities due to factors such as health, social environment, and other external conditions. In other words, this approach is concerned not only with possessions but with what individuals are actually able to do with them (Nussbaum, 2011).

This approach also highlights the importance of *freedom* as an essential component of social justice. For Sen, freedom is not only a means but an end in itself. Substantive freedoms, such as the freedom to participate in political life, access to education, and healthcare, are considered indispensable for achieving social justice. Sen argues that public policies should aim to expand these substantive freedoms and that a just society is one in which individuals have the opportunities and capabilities necessary to choose and act autonomously in their lives (Sen, 2000).

The path to social justice

According to Sen, social justice is not achieved through the creation of perfect or ideal institutions, but rather through a continuous process of practical improvement aimed at reducing evident injustices in society. This approach, known as "comparative justice," focuses on identifying concrete injustices and implementing solutions to correct them, rather than pursuing a utopian ideal of a completely just society (Sen, 2000, 2009).

The following are some key elements for achieving social justice, derived from the theoretical framework of this author:

- **The capability approach:** Social justice is achieved by ensuring that all individuals have the real freedoms or capabilities necessary to lead a life they value. This implies not only the distribution of resources but also guaranteeing that individuals have the opportunity to fully develop their potential and make decisions about their own lives. In other words, social justice requires expanding individual capabilities, including education, health, and political freedom, among others (Sen, 2000, 2009).

- **Justice as a process:** Sen argues that justice is not a final state to be attained but rather an ongoing process aimed at reducing tangible injustices. This means that there will always be room for improvement and that the advancement of social justice depends on eliminating inequalities and correcting errors that negatively impact people's lives (Sen, 2009).

- **The importance of public reasoning:** Sen emphasizes the role of "public reason" in achieving social justice. This means that decisions about what constitutes an injustice and how to address it should result from open and reasoned discussions that include multiple perspectives. From this perspective, democracy is key, allowing citizens to participate in debates on what changes are necessary to improve social justice (Sen, 2009).

- **Open impartiality:** For Sen, social justice cannot be understood solely from a local perspective. Injustices must be evaluated considering a more global and impartial vision, which he calls "open impartiality." This means that concerns about justice should not be confined to national or local boundaries but should incorporate the voices and realities of people from different contexts and cultures (Sen, 2009).

- **The role of institutions and human behavior:** While institutions are important, Sen argues that social justice cannot rely solely on them. Justice is not just about designing the right rules but also about how these rules affect people's lives. This means it is equally important to consider real social behavior and interactions and how they influence the realization of justice (Sen, 2009).

In summary, for this author, social justice is a dynamic goal that is progressively achieved by reducing identifiable injustices, expanding human capabilities, and actively engaging people in the debate about what is just. Social justice, therefore, is not a fixed or absolute state but an ongoing process of improving people's lives, promoting equal opportunities, and ensuring that everyone has the necessary capabilities to live a dignified life.

Functionalist approach of Durkheim and Merton

Durkheim, father of functionalism

The functionalist approach of Émile Durkheim is one of the fundamental pillars of classical sociological theory. Durkheim proposed that society should be understood as a complex and cohesive system in which its different parts (institutions, norms, values, and beliefs) serve specific functions that contribute to social stability and order. From his perspective, each element of society exists to fulfill collective needs, and his primary concern was to understand how various aspects of social life maintained social cohesion.

Durkheim emphasized that social cohesion was achieved through what he called "mechanical solidarity" and "organic solidarity." The former, characteristic of primitive and less complex societies, was based on the similarity of its members and a strong collective consciousness that united individuals around shared beliefs and norms. In contrast, organic solidarity, which prevails in more modern and differentiated societies, arises from the interdependence of its members, who, through the division of labor, perform specialized roles within the social structure (Durkheim, 2007).

One of the most important concepts within Durkheim's functionalism is the idea of the *social fact*. According to him, social facts are phenomena external to individuals that exert a coercive power over them and must be studied as objective things. Social facts include norms, laws, institutions, and moralities that guide and limit individual behavior. Durkheim argued that these social facts are essential for maintaining order and stability in society (Durkheim, 2001).

A crucial element of the functionalist analysis is the concept of anomie, which Durkheim used to describe situations in which social ties and the norms that regulate behavior weaken or disappear. According to him, anomie occurs during times of social change or crisis when traditional norms cease to be effective, and new norms have not yet emerged to replace them. This leads to social disintegration and distress, as individuals lose their points of reference in social life (Durkheim, 2012).

However, Durkheimian functionalism has been criticized for its tendency to focus on stability and social cohesion, without giving enough attention to conflicts and changes within society. One of the most important thinkers in this regard was Robert Merton, who developed a more nuanced version of classical functionalism. Merton distinguished himself from Durkheim mainly by recognizing that not all institutions or social practices have positive effects on society.

Merton's contribution

Merton's functionalist approach constituted a critical evolution of classical functionalism, providing significant nuances and reformulations to the paradigm initially developed by Durkheim. While traditional functionalism focused on social stability and cohesion, Merton expanded this approach by introducing concepts such as *manifest functions*, *latent functions*, and *dysfunctions*, offering a more dynamic and flexible perspective on the functioning of institutions and social systems (Merton, 2002). Thus, his approach has been key in the evolution of functionalism towards a more nuanced and analytical perspective.

Manifest and latent functions

One of Merton's most significant contributions to functionalism is the distinction between manifest and latent functions, concepts that allow for a deeper analysis of social structures. *Manifest functions* are the objective and expected consequences of a social practice or institution, which are recognized and intended by social actors. For example, the manifest function of the educational system is the transmission of knowledge and skills to new generations (Merton, 2002).

On the other hand, *latent functions* are the unintended and unrecognized consequences of a practice or institution, which can still have a significant impact on society. These functions can be either beneficial or problematic. In the case of the educational system, a latent function could be the creation of social networks among students, providing them with opportunities to establish social and professional relationships. According to Merton (2002):

> The concept of latent function broadens the observer's attention beyond the question of whether the behavior achieves its stated purpose […] But with the concept of latent function, we continue our investigation and examine the consequences of the ceremony not for the rain gods nor for meteorological phenomena, but for the group performing the ceremony. And here it may be found, as many observers indicate, that the ceremony does indeed have functions, but latent or unintended functions (p. 140).

Social dysfunctions

Merton (2002) also introduces the concept of dysfunction, which refers to those consequences of a practice or institution that may destabilize or hinder the harmonious functioning of society. In this sense, not all institutions or social practices contribute to balance and cohesion. Some may have, according to the author, negative or harmful effects that foster conflict, instability, or social change. As the author states: "These tensions may

be dysfunctional for the social system as it then exists; they may also be conducive to producing changes in that system. In any case, they exert pressure for change" (Merton, 2002, p. 200).

A classic example of dysfunction is the prison system, which, although its *manifest function* is the reintegration and rehabilitation of inmates, may, in the long run, have *latent effects* that lead to greater marginalization or criminal recidivism. This critical and balanced view of functionalism allows for the analysis of social structures from a more comprehensive and realistic perspective, recognizing that not all institutions fulfill exclusively positive roles in society.

In conclusion, functionalism, both in the works of Durkheim and Merton, has been fundamental in the development of a deeper and more structured understanding of sociocultural realities within the social sciences. While Durkheim laid the foundations of functional analysis by emphasizing how institutions and social practices contribute to the cohesion and stability of the social system, Merton expanded this perspective by introducing concepts such as manifest and latent functions, as well as dysfunctions, acknowledging not only positive outcomes but also unintended consequences and internal tensions that can generate changes in social structures. Together, these approaches provide a more comprehensive and nuanced vision of social phenomena, enabling an analysis of both the mechanisms that promote stability and those that drive change within society.

II. PSYCHOSOCIAL RELATIONAL APPROACHES

Systemic approach

General Systems Theory (GST)

The *systemic approach*, fundamental in various academic disciplines, has its roots in the *General Systems Theory* (GST) proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the mid-20th century. This theory emerged in response to the need for a framework capable of integrating and explaining the complex phenomena observed across different fields of knowledge, from biology to the social sciences. Bertalanffy (1989) argued that the principles governing biological systems could also be applied to other types of systems, thereby suggesting a holistic and transdisciplinary perspective. His approach has significantly influenced the way researchers and theorists study systems, enabling a more comprehensive and interconnected understanding of complex phenomena. This methodological legacy remains a cornerstone in contemporary systemic theorization and practice, providing the foundations for exploring the interrelations and dynamics that characterize systems at multiple scales.

From this theoretical perspective, a *System* should be understood as a set of interconnected elements that work together toward a common goal, forming an organized whole. These elements can be objects, people, concepts, or a combination of these, and are characterized by their interactions and relationships, which distinguish them from their environment (Bertalanffy, 1989). The key to a system lies in how its components influence and regulate each other to maintain its functionality and achieve its objectives. This idea applies to a wide range of contexts, from natural systems, such as ecosystems, to human-created systems, such as social, economic, or technological systems.

The GST and the systemic approach in social sciences

In the field of social sciences, among the main and most classic exponents of systems theory in this field are theorists Talcott Parsons and Niklas Luhmann. The first, Parsons (1966), was a pioneer in introducing systems theory into sociology with his AGIL paradigm, which identifies the four necessary functions that every "social system" must perform to survive: *Adaptation*, *Goal Attainment*, *Integration*, and *Latency* (maintenance of tensions). From the perspective of this theorist, a social system is described as a structure in which individual actors interact within a specific social situation. These interactions are governed by a set of shared cultural norms and patterns. For the author, the social system is part of a broader framework composed of three interrelated systems: the social system, the personality system of actors, and the cultural system.

Parsons considers the social system as an *order of human interactions* that has the capacity to function as a large relational system. Individual actors perform roles within the system, which are organized around motivations and mutual expectations. These interactions are mediated by cultural symbols that enable communication and establish a structure of shared norms and values, which organize the behavior of actors. Within this framework, social relationships develop and are maintained through the institutionalization of these values and role expectations (Parsons, 1966).

Parsons emphasizes that the social system cannot be understood in isolation but in relation to the other two systems: the personality system, which refers to individual motivations, and the cultural system, which provides the set of norms and values shared by actors. These three systems work together to maintain social balance and stability (Parsons, 1966).

The other important theorist, Luhmann (1998), sought instead to develop a systems theory that could explain social phenomena in a universal manner. Inspired by the biological work of Chilean scientists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, he proposed that social systems are *autopoietic* and *self-referential* systems that differentiate themselves from their environment through the creation of *complexity*. This complexity is not seen as an obstacle but rather as a necessary condition for the existence of the system, with its primary function being to reduce it.

Luhmann critiques classical functionalism and proposes to radicalize its analysis by suggesting that *functions* precede *structures*. In this sense, he focuses on how systems construct structures based on the need to manage complexities. A key point in his theory is the distinction between system and environment: systems are less complex than their environment and operate in a closed manner, generating their own operations and elements without direct influence from the environment (Arriaga, 2003).

Autopoiesis, in turn, is a concept of utmost importance in Luhmann's theory, in which he argues that it is generated in social systems through *communication*. For the author, communication is the central operation that enables the self-generation of social systems, while *individual consciousness* is part of the environment. According to this perspective, social systems cannot communicate with themselves or with the environment, but through the concept of *structural coupling*, they maintain an interdependent relationship with other systems, such as consciousness, thereby enabling communication (Arriaga, 2003).

Luhmann proposes that the internal complexity of systems is related to their ability to select elements and relationships. This selection is contingent and subject to the evolution of systems. Additionally, he addresses the idea of systemic boundaries, which not only separate the system from its environment but also enable interaction through causal relationships, shaping a system that is in constant transformation (Arriaga, 2003).

Ultimately, Luhmann's systems theory is a classic and fundamental conceptual tool that allows for an understanding of the dynamics of social systems in relation to their environment, their autopoiesis, and the mechanisms of communication and complexity that sustain them.

The thought of Parsons and Luhmann has left a profound influence on contemporary social theory, generating both followers and critics who have expanded or revised their approaches. Among the authors who have followed Parsons' legacy, Jeffrey Alexander

(1982) stands out for developing the concept of *neofunctionalism*. Alexander sought to update Parsons' classical functionalism by integrating new perspectives on conflict and social change, aspects that the original approach tended to relegate to the background. His work has aimed to offer a more dynamic vision of social functions within the context of modern societies.

On the other hand, Jürgen Habermas (1999) engaged in a critical dialogue with both Parsons and Luhmann. From his theory of *communicative action*, Habermas challenged Luhmann's systemic perspective, arguing that its self-referential approach and view of closed systems underestimated the importance of human interaction based on mutual understanding. Habermas contrasts Luhmann's systems theory with a communicative conception of society, in which action oriented toward consensus plays a central role.

For his part, in the field of law, Gunther Teubner (1993) has been an important follower of Luhmann. Teubner has adapted the theory of autopoietic systems to the analysis of legal systems, developing an innovative approach to the autopoiesis of law. His work has helped to understand how legal systems operate in a self-referential manner in a globalized context, maintaining structural coupling relationships with other social subsystems.

Another relevant author in this framework is Margaret Archer (2009), whose theory of *morphogenesis* offers a critical perspective on the ideas of Parsons and Luhmann by focusing on the relationship between structure and agency. Although Archer does not directly follow these authors, her approach to how social structures condition individual actions engages with the theoretical concerns of both, providing an alternative based on critical realism.

For his part, Claus Offe (1984) has developed an approach that combines elements of systems theory to analyze the state and public policies. Partly inspired by Luhmann's ideas, Offe has examined the structural tensions that characterize modern societies, particularly concerning the interaction between political and economic systems.

Finally, Helmut Willke (2006, 2016), a direct disciple of Luhmann, has delved into the application of systems theory to the study of organizations and global governance. Willke has explored how systems manage complexity and decision-making in a globalized environment, highlighting the relevance of systemic thinking in modern governance.

As can be seen, these authors have enriched and adapted the theories of Parsons and Luhmann, contributing to the development of a social theory more attuned to contemporary challenges. Their works underscore the vitality of functionalist and systemic theories in the analysis of modern society.

The systemic approach in Social Work

Based on all the above, it is important to highlight that systems theory has also provided a valuable and transformative perspective in Social Work, offering conceptual tools to understand the complexity of societies and their mechanisms of change and stability.

In this regard, Payne (1995) refers to the main authors who contributed to the incorporation of systems theory into the development of Social Work as an intervention-based professional discipline. The author states:

> Hearn (1958 and 1959) made one of the first contributions to the application of systems theory to social work […] Pincus and Minahan (1973) offer us an approach to social work that explicitly applies systems ideas. This approach is based on the principle that people, in order to lead a satisfying life, depend on the systems within their immediate social environment, which is why social work must focus on such systems […] Social work seeks to identify which elements of the interactions between clients and their environment are causing problems (Payne, 1995, pp. 177, 180, 181).

Viscarret (2014), for his part, complements what Payne stated by explaining that authors Allen Pincus and Anne Minahan sought to develop a model that would establish a unified reference for all types of professional practice in Social Work. This specific systemic model was based on the principle that individuals depend on the social systems in their immediate environment to overcome the difficulties they face in life. Their proposal includes three types of systems: informal or natural resource systems (family, friends, neighbors), formal systems (community groups, unions), and social systems (schools, hospitals).

According to Viscarret, both authors define Social Work as an interaction between individuals and systems within a given social environment, emphasizing the importance of these interactions in enhancing people's ability to cope with life tasks. In their model, they divide intervention into four basic systems: the change agent system [social worker], the client system [individuals or groups seeking help], the target system [those who benefit from the intervention], and the action system [networks and systems that support change] (Viscarret, 2014).

The model proposed by Pincus and Minahan also incorporates continuous evaluation throughout the entire intervention process, emphasizing that change is not a linear process but rather a sequence of actions aimed at a goal that requires constant reassessment (Viscarret, 2014).

Viscarret also refers to the contribution of other important authors in this field: Carel B. Germain and Alex Gitterman, who developed an ecosystemic model for Social Work, which they called the *Life Model*. This model has a dual approach, both systemic and ecological, and is primarily an intervention-based model. It is based on the idea that human problems and needs arise from the constant exchanges that occur between individuals and their physical and social environment. From this premise, the intervention model focuses on the concept of *transaction* as a constant interaction between people and their surroundings, emphasizing that this allows them to exist without destroying it (Viscarret, 2014).

The *Life Model*, in simple terms, is divided into three systemic evolutionary phases: initial, developmental, and termination, reflecting the natural life process. It is structured around three areas of social intervention: developmental transitions and life changes, the insensitivity of the social and physical environment, and difficulties in relationships and communication within primary groups such as the family (Viscarret, 2014).

Payne (1995) explains that, in general, the systemic approach in Social Work is based, as previously mentioned, on the constant interaction between individuals and their

environment, understanding that social problems cannot be addressed in isolation but must be treated from a holistic perspective. Systems theory proposes that individuals are part of a broader system, composed of subsystems (systems within systems) that interact with one another. This approach, rooted in Bertalanffy's previously mentioned General Systems Theory, recognizes that changes in one part of the system affect the other parts reciprocally, allowing social workers to address problems comprehensively. In this discipline, this means that professionals, when intervening with their clients, must consider not only the individual in isolation but also their social, economic, and environmental context as an interactive whole.

The systemic approach in Social Work, therefore, would be mainly divided into two theoretical currents: general systems theory and ecological systems theory (or ecosystemic theory). The first encompasses all approaches that focus on how different subsystems interact within a larger system, while the second includes those that emphasize the adaptive relationship between individuals and their environment.

Finally, Payne points out that this approach challenges the traditional medical model of Social Work, which viewed professionals as external agents who solved clients' problems. Instead, the systemic approach in disciplinary intervention promotes the idea that social workers must operate within the system itself, facilitating change processes that address not only individual problems but also the structural factors that perpetuate them (Payne, 1995). This represented a paradigm shift in the history of the discipline, moving from a more directive approach by the professional to a more collaborative and dynamic one, where both the client and the professional are recognized as part of a larger system in constant interaction and evolution.

Types of systems according to General Systems Theory

General Systems Theory (GST), as previously explained, is based on a holistic perspective that integrates both natural and social sciences, addressing reality as a set of interdependent relationships. In this regard, the following are the two basic types of systems, as described in the academic work of Arnold and Osorio (1998) in their introductory explanation of GST:

- **Open systems:** These are systems that maintain a constant exchange with their environment. These systems import and process elements such as energy, information, and/or matter from their surroundings. This exchange is essential for their equilibrium, reproductive capacity, and continuity, allowing them to maintain their viability over time. Open systems are characteristic of living systems, as they depend on the environment for their survival and can adapt their structures according to changing environmental conditions (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Closed systems:** These are systems that do not exchange any elements with their environment, meaning they do not allow the input or output of energy, infor-

mation, and/or matter. Such systems tend to reach their maximum state of equilibrium by equalizing with their surroundings, ultimately leading to entropy—that is, disorganization and homogenization with the environment. A closed system is doomed to lose its structure and organization as time progresses (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

Characteristics and fundamental concepts of a system

Following the framework of GST, it is essential for this research to understand the fundamental characteristics that define a *system* from this theoretical perspective. Below, the key concepts and attributes that facilitate a better understanding of what constitutes a system under this approach will be reviewed:

- **Elements:** These are the internal parts or components of a system. They can be objects or processes and are organized in such a way that, through their interactions, they generate an overall systemic behavior. The interdependence among these elements is key to defining the nature of a system (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Relationships:** The elements of a system are connected through interdependent and mutually influential relationships. These relationships are essential for understanding the behavior of the system, as the effects that elements have on one another are what keep the system unified and functional. Relationships can be internal [between the system's elements] or external [with the environment] (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Structure:** This refers to the more or less stable interrelationships between the parts of a system. This structure is observable at a given moment and helps to understand how the components interact to form a coherent whole. The primary structure pertains to internal relationships, while the hyperstructure focuses on external relationships with other systems (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Synergy:** This phenomenon arises from the interactions between the parts or elements of a system, implying that "the whole is not equal to the sum of its parts." This means that the behavior of a system cannot be explained simply by observing each of its elements in isolation. Synergy is, therefore, the property that allows the interactions among a system's components to generate an overall behavior that cannot be predicted solely from the individual parts (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Subsystems:** A subsystem is a set of elements and relationships that operate within a larger system, responding to specialized structures and functions. Like systems, subsystems exhibit systemic properties such as synergy, among others. Additionally, the delimitation of a subsystem is relative to the observer's perspective and the model used, allowing for discussions about subsystems, systems, or suprasystems depending on the systemic characteristics being observed (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Function:** The function refers to the output or product of a system that is directed toward maintaining the larger system to which it belongs. It represents the system's purpose within a broader context (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Boundary or limits:** Systems have boundaries that separate them from their environment. These boundaries are defined by the observer and determine what belongs to the system and what remains outside of it. Boundaries are essential for identifying and studying a system (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Input and output:** In open systems, such as social systems, "inputs" are the resources (energy, information, matter) that the system receives from its environment, while "outputs" are the products or services that the system delivers back to the environment. This constant flow of inputs and outputs is what keeps living systems functioning (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Feedback:** This is the process through which a system gathers information about the effects of its decisions and adjusts its behavior accordingly. Negative feedback helps maintain system stability, while positive feedback promotes change or system growth (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Entropy and negentropy:** *Entropy* is the natural tendency of closed systems to become disorganized and lose their structure. In contrast, *negentropy* is the process by which open systems import energy from their environment to maintain organization and prevent entropy (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

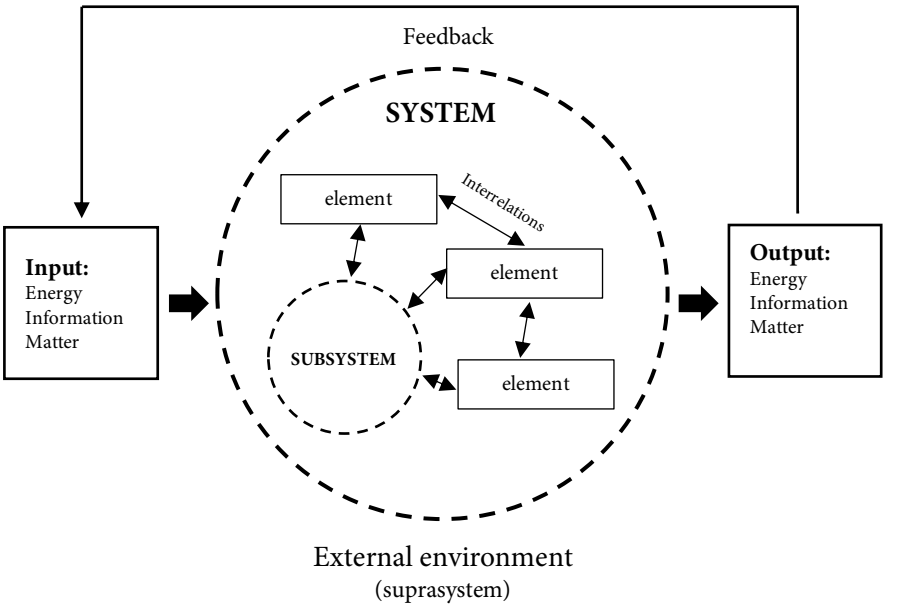
- **Emergence:** This concept refers to the appearance of new and qualitatively different properties or behaviors that arise when the components of a system interact. These emergent properties cannot be predicted by observing only the isolated parts of the system (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Homeostasis and morphogenesis:** *Homeostasis* is the ability of a system to maintain stability in response to environmental changes through self-regulation mechanisms. *Morphogenesis*, on the other hand, refers to the processes of change and adaptation that allow a system to evolve and adjust to new conditions (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

- **Teleology:** Systems are often oriented toward specific goals or purposes. This concept, inherited from Aristotle, implies that a system's behavior is directed toward achieving certain states or objectives (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

These elements provide a comprehensive view of systems from the perspective of General Systems Theory (GST), where the key focus is not only on observing the individual parts but also on how they interact to form an organized and functional whole.

In the following figure, the fundamental elements of an open system are graphically represented, as described in the relevant literature:



In conclusion, the systemic approach, based on Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory (GST), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexity of systems across various disciplines, including social systems. This perspective considers systems as interconnected sets of elements that, through interactions and feedback, maintain a balanced functioning. As mentioned, in the field of Social Work, the systemic approach has been fundamental in addressing social problems holistically, recognizing the constant interaction between individuals and their social, economic, and environmental surroundings.

Life cycle of open systems

Dynamics and evolution of systems

Bertalanffy (1989), as a starting point, argued that *open systems* rely on exchanges with their environment to maintain their internal organization and resist the entropic tendency of closed systems. Although he does not explicitly develop the concept of a "life cycle" for such systems, his notion of homeostasis and self-organization is key to understanding how open systems sustain their functioning over time. The author suggests that these systems go through phases of growth, adaptation, and equilibrium, constantly interacting with their environment.

On the other hand, Ilya Prigogine (1984), a Belgian physicist and chemist, is known for his contributions to the study of open systems and their behavior in far-from-equilibrium conditions. Through his concept of *dissipative structures*, the author explores how open systems, constantly exchanging energy with their environment, can evolve into states of greater complexity and organization under specific conditions. His theory challenges the classical approach of thermodynamics, which asserts that all systems tend toward equilibrium and entropy. Instead of viewing entropy as an inevitable end, Prigogine argues that open systems can, in certain cases, use external energy to create order and organize themselves into more complex forms (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984).

A key aspect of this author's work is the recognition that open systems go through phases of stability and chaos. Dissipative structures emerge when systems move away from equilibrium, and during this process, they experience what Prigogine calls *bifurcations*—critical moments in which a system can take one of several possible paths. These bifurcations are moments of instability where small perturbations can lead to significant changes, reorganizing the system into a new state of order or even leading it to collapse. In this way, Prigogine introduces the idea that chaos and instability are not necessarily destructive but can serve as precursors to a new order (Prigogine, 1997).

Prigogine's work is relevant for understanding a concept of the "life cycle" in open systems, as, from his perspective, systems do not evolve in a linear manner but rather through a series of cycles of order and disorder. These cycles are essential for the evolution and survival of open systems. In this sense, systems can go through phases of growth, stabilization, crisis, and either transformation or decline. The author suggests that open systems, when far from equilibrium, are capable of generating new organized states, allowing them to continuously adapt and evolve rather than succumb to total disorganization and chaos (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984).

James Grier Miller, another prominent systems theorist, is widely recognized for his work *Living systems* (1978), in which he developed a theoretical framework for analyzing both living and non-living systems from a systemic perspective. In this work, Miller proposed that all living systems—whether biological, social, or psychological—share certain structural and functional characteristics that enable them to maintain their organization and operate efficiently over time. His approach is based on the idea that living systems are open systems, meaning they exchange energy, matter, and information with their environment. This exchange allows them to remain far from thermodynamic equilibrium and sustain their internal organization (Miller, 1978).

One of Miller's key contributions is his description of a *life cycle* for living systems, which go through stages of birth, growth, maturity, and decline. This life cycle is not exclusive to biological systems but also applies to organizations, societies, and even individual systems such as the human brain. According to the author, living systems can self-organize and adapt to environmental demands through a series of subsystems that perform specific functions, such as information processing or energy management. These subsystems interact in a coordinated manner, allowing living systems to grow and evolve while continuously adapting to changes in their environment (Miller, 1978).

In his theory, Miller also introduces the notion of system levels, a hierarchy in which living systems can be analyzed at different scales, from cells to societies. Each of these levels follows a similar life cycle, adapting to its environment and maintaining its organi-

zation through processes of feedback and control. The author emphasizes that living systems are not static but go through cycles of stability and change, where adaptability and regeneration are essential for their survival (Miller, 1978). In this sense, his work provides a deep understanding of how living systems sustain their organization and transform in response to external influences, highlighting the cyclical nature of life in open systems.

Another prominent author, Gregory Bateson—an anthropologist, epistemologist, and systems theorist—is known for his interdisciplinary approach and his development of systemic thinking applied to the social, biological, and psychological sciences. In his work *Steps to an ecology of mind* (1987), Bateson proposes that the mind and living systems are part of *an interconnected whole*, in which *relationships* and *communication patterns* play an essential role in the adaptation and evolution of systems. Through his work, the author introduces the concept of *feedback*, which describes how systems, in their interaction with the environment, adjust their behavior through cyclical processes that allow them to learn, adapt, and self-regulate. This cybernetic and systemic approach is fundamental to understanding how open systems evolve in response to external influences (Bateson, 1987).

One of the key aspects of Bateson's thought is his exploration of *positive* and *negative* feedback cycles as mechanisms that regulate the evolution of open systems. Negative feedback allows systems to correct deviations and maintain a state of equilibrium, while positive feedback drives changes, often accelerating the evolution or transformation of the system. Bateson argues that living systems, including social and ecological systems, depend on a dynamic balance between these two types of feedback to survive and evolve. Thus, the "life cycle" of open systems, according to this author, does not follow a linear trajectory but is marked by constant fluctuations and adjustments in response to interactions with their environment (Bateson, 1987).

Bateson also proposes that communication patterns within systems are essential for their survival and adaptation. Rather than focusing solely on the individual components of a system, Bateson studies the relationships and exchanges of information between these components. This relational approach leads him to introduce the concept of the *ecology of mind*, a holistic vision in which mental processes and social interactions are seen as interdependent systems that evolve through cycles of learning and adaptation. According to Bateson, these cycles of interaction and feedback enable systems to remain functional and respond to changes in their environment, whether through minor adjustments or significant transformations (Bateson, 1987).

A concrete proposal for the life cycle of an open system

Lastly, but not least, in the organizational field, the renowned American researcher Peter Senge presents an innovative vision in one of his most influential works, titled *La quinta disciplina: El arte y la práctica de la organización abierta al aprendizaje* (2010) [The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization]. In this book, the author describes a sequence of evolutionary stages that social systems undergo throughout their existence, particularly organizational systems. These stages are analyzed based on how these systems grow, encounter limits, and eventually either adapt or collapse. Below is an excerpt of these stages, inferred from the work of this author:

- **Initial growth:** The system experiences rapid growth driven by reinforcing factors, meaning the processes that amplify change. During this phase, the system appears to thrive, as the positive effects of the implemented changes feed back into continued growth (Senge, 2010).

- **Encountering limits:** Eventually, the system begins to face limitations. These limits may include finite resources, internal or external resistance, or unforeseen conditions. As the system reaches these constraints, its growth starts to decelerate (Senge, 2010).

- **Growth deceleration:** With the emergence of limiting factors, the system's growth begins to slow significantly. Solutions that previously worked become less effective, and the system may fall into patterns of stagnation (Senge, 2010).

- **Compensatory process:** This process refers to how the system attempts to counteract the impact of limitations through adjustments and changes, such as reducing growth or implementing new strategies. However, if the limiting factors are not adequately addressed, the system may enter a phase of accelerated decline (Senge, 2010).

- **Accelerated collapse:** If the limitations are not effectively managed, the system may experience a reversal, where the feedback processes that once fueled growth now accelerate contraction or collapse. This collapse can be rapid and unexpected for system participants (Senge, 2010).

These stages are considered fundamental to the present theoretical framework in order to understand how open systems (individual or relational) go through natural cycles of growth and decline, and how timely intervention can enable a system to adapt and remain viable over time.

Second-order cybernetics

Second-order cybernetics emerges as an evolution of classical cybernetics, also known as first-order cybernetics, and is characterized by integrating the *observer* within the *observed system*. While first-order cybernetics focuses on control and communication within systems, second-order cybernetics adds a *reflexive* layer by including the subjectivity of the observer as an inherent part of the system's analysis. This implies a fundamental shift in understanding how systems self-regulate and interact with their environment, making it a key component in the analysis of complex and sociocultural systems.

General concept of second-order cybernetics

Second-order cybernetics was primarily developed by Heinz von Foerster in the late 20th century. In his work, Foerster (2003) argues that the observer is not independent

of what is being observed; rather, their perception and participation alter the system. This means that the act of observation itself becomes part of the process being studied, making second-order cybernetics a "reflective" discipline.

The fundamental principle of this cybernetics is that there are no objective observations, only observations made by observers. This transforms the study of systems into a more complex analysis, recognizing that every observer is an active agent in the creation and definition of the system. Such a perspective is crucial in the field of social and cultural sciences, where feedback processes and the dynamic interaction between subjects are essential elements for understanding phenomena such as the construction of meanings, social norms, and collective behaviors.

Implications in social and cultural systems

Second-order cybernetics has significantly contributed to the analysis of social and cultural systems. From this perspective, based on the ideas of Maturana and Varela (2003) regarding autopoiesis, living systems—including social systems—are considered to have the autonomous capacity to self-manage and actively maintain their internal organization through continuous processes of interaction and feedback. These processes generate internal dynamics that emerge from the recursive relationships among the system's elements.

Within this conceptual framework, observers are not external or neutral agents but rather participants immersed in the very system they observe, inevitably conditioned by the same normative structures that are the object of their analysis (Foerster, 2003). This perspective implies that all knowledge produced is, by definition, a co-constructed outcome between the observer and the observed system. Consequently, institutions, cultures, and social groups are not static entities but rather systems in constant transformation, whose changes occur through ongoing and reciprocal interactions between individuals and normative frameworks.

An example of the application of second-order cybernetics in the sociocultural sphere is the study of power and control dynamics in contemporary societies. Geyer and Van der Zouwen (2001) argue that second-order cybernetics provides a critical perspective for understanding how social systems self-generate the rules that govern them and how actors within these systems actively contribute to their maintenance or transformation. By observing societies from this perspective, it becomes possible to analyze how discourses and social practices reinforce or challenge the status quo and how observers—such as social researchers—play a crucial role in defining these systems.

Reflexivity and epistemology

From an epistemological perspective, second-order cybernetics challenges the concept of scientific objectivity. For Foerster (2003), knowledge is not a passive representation of the external world but an active construction in which the observer plays a key role. This approach has influenced various disciplines, such as anthropology and sociology, by questioning the neutrality of the researcher and highlighting the importance of reflexivity in the research process. This means that the observer must be aware of their influence on the observed system and how their own values, beliefs, and cultural contexts affect their interpretation of the studied phenomena.

This idea of reflexivity has also been developed by theorists such as Luhmann (1998), who applied second-order cybernetics to his theory of social systems. This author argued that social systems are self-referential observers that self-generate and maintain their organization through the distinction between themselves and their environment. In this sense, society is not something external that can be observed from a neutral standpoint but rather a dynamic construction in which both social actors and scientific observers actively participate.

Relevance for contemporary sociocultural analysis

Second-order cybernetics is particularly relevant in the analysis of contemporary social phenomena. Social and cultural systems today are marked by their complexity and global interconnectedness, making it difficult to separate the observer from the observed system. An example of this is the analysis of social networks and the impact of technology on the construction of identities and social relationships. From a second-order cybernetics perspective, social media users do not merely participate in a pre-existing system but actively contribute to its formation and evolution through their interactions and content production.

The perspective of second-order cybernetics is also useful for studying sociocultural changes, such as social movements or transformations in cultural norms. These processes are often understood as self-generated phenomena, in which the actions of individuals and collectives do not merely follow preexisting rules but, through feedback, produce new norms and meanings that reconfigure the social system (Geyer & Van der Zouwen, 2001).

For all the reasons mentioned above, second-order cybernetics offers a powerful conceptual framework for understanding how sociocultural systems are not objective and static entities but are in constant co-creation and evolution through the interaction between individuals and their structures. This approach foregrounds the importance of the observer in the analysis of any system, emphasizing the reflexive nature of knowledge. The implications of this cybernetics in sociocultural studies enable a more dynamic and complex understanding of how social systems function, self-generate, and change over time.

Systemic functionality and dysfunctionality

The concepts of systemic *functionality* and *dysfunctionality* are fundamental within the systemic approach, as they enable an understanding of the behavior and adaptation of systems in various contexts. From a theoretical perspective, these concepts must be analyzed considering the dynamic nature of systems and how they respond to both internal and external changes.

Systemic functionality

Functionality in a system refers to its ability to maintain organization and fulfill its established objectives or purposes. A functional system is one that successfully adapts to

environmental demands while preserving its stability and internal coherence (Bertalanffy, 1989). In general terms, a functional system is capable of sustaining homeostasis, meaning a dynamic equilibrium that enables it to operate effectively in response to external or internal variations. As previously discussed, General Systems Theory (GST) asserts that a system's functionality depends on the harmonious interaction of its components and its ability to efficiently process both positive and negative feedback (Bertalanffy, 1989).

A functional system is one that exhibits a *high adaptive capacity*, meaning it can adjust to new conditions without losing its identity or basic structure. This is related to the concept of autopoiesis, described by Maturana and Varela (2003), in which living systems, for example, are able to reproduce their components and maintain their organization despite external influences. In this sense, functionality is also linked to the resilience of the system, that is, its ability to recover from disturbances.

Systemic dysfunction

In contrast, a system's dysfunction arises when it is unable to maintain its homeostasis (stability), thereby compromising its ability to adapt and fulfill its purposes. Systemic dysfunction manifests when feedback mechanisms fail or when subsystems do not interact harmoniously, generating tensions or internal imbalances (Minuchin, 2004).

A dysfunctional system can exhibit different patterns of maladaptation, which may include rigidity, the inability to change in response to new circumstances, or the fragmentation of its components. According to Watzlawick et al. (1985), dysfunctional systems tend to generate communicational paradoxes and repetitive interaction patterns that perpetuate conflict or inefficiency. This is particularly evident in family or social systems, where interactions among system members are crucial for overall functioning. A clear example of dysfunctionality is when a family system establishes rigid roles or pathological interactions that hinder the individual development of its members (Minuchin, 2004).

Evaluation criteria

To evaluate the functionality or dysfunctionality of a system, it is necessary to consider both its *structure* and its *process*. The structure refers to the organization of the system's components, while the process involves the dynamic interaction between those components. According to Bertalanffy (1989), a dysfunctional system tends to exhibit structural rigidity or inefficient interaction processes, which eventually lead to collapse or stagnation.

Additionally, it is important to consider feedback within the system. Negative feedback tends to maintain the system's stability, while positive feedback promotes change and innovation. When a system fails to adequately integrate these two types of feedback, it becomes prone to dysfunctionality (Watzlawick et al., 1985). This is particularly evident in social systems, where conflict and the inability to adapt to new demands can lead to organizational or family crises.

Implications in systemic intervention

Lastly, from an intervention perspective, the systemic approach seeks to restore

functionality by addressing dysfunctional interaction patterns. In family systems, for example, Minuchin's Structural Therapy (2004) specifically focuses on reorganizing subsystems and redefining boundaries within the family to reestablish harmonious functioning. In organizational terms, an effective systemic intervention involves identifying communication and feedback failures within the organization and correcting them to enhance overall performance.

In summary, the concepts of systemic functionality and dysfunctionality are fundamental to understanding the behavior of systems at different levels. While functionality implies balance, adaptation, and effective organization, dysfunctionality reflects inefficiency, rigidity, and failure in the proper interaction of system components. Systemic intervention focuses precisely on correcting these failures to restore the system's optimal functioning.

Systemic autopoiesis and language

Systemic autopoiesis, a fundamental concept within the systemic approach, was introduced by Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela in the 1970s. This term refers to the ability of living systems to produce and maintain their own organization through internal processes. Technically, an autopoietic system is one that reproduces itself and is capable of maintaining its identity over time despite its interaction with the environment (Maturana & Varela, 1997).

Autopoiesis and its relationship with language

The concept of autopoiesis is not only applicable to biological systems but has also been extended to social and communicative systems, where language plays a crucial role. From this perspective, social systems can be understood as autopoietic systems that organize and reproduce themselves through *linguistic interactions*. Luhmann (1998), one of the main theorists who expanded the concept of autopoiesis into the social domain, argues that social systems are not static entities but dynamic ones that rely on the continuous flow of communication. Language, in this sense, is the medium through which social systems self-generate and maintain their coherence.

In systemic autopoiesis, language is considered more than just a means of communication. It is a structuring mechanism that allows systems to define their boundaries and maintain their organization. From this perspective, language does not merely transmit information but also "creates" and "reproduces" *social realities*. This implies that the narratives generated through language are fundamental to the self-generation of systems. Maturana and Varela (2003) argue that language plays a constitutive role in the creation of shared realities and, therefore, in the autopoiesis of human systems.

From this perspective, this approach suggests that the process of autopoiesis in social systems is inherently *circular*: language generates social structures that, in turn, reinforce and transform the language used. This bidirectional relationship enables social systems to adapt and evolve without losing their fundamental identity. As Luhmann (1998) describes, social systems, unlike biological ones, operate through the communicative code

of language, allowing them to differentiate and specialize in their internal functions while interacting with their environment. The ability of language to "create shared meanings" is what enables these systems to maintain their internal coherence despite changes in their surroundings.

A distinctive characteristic of autopoietic systems is their ability to establish *internal boundaries* that differentiate them from their environment. In social systems, these boundaries are created and maintained through language. According to Maturana and Varela (1997), language not only defines what is part of the system and what is not, but it also establishes the rules and norms that govern behavior within the system. This capacity of language to define and maintain boundaries is crucial for autopoiesis, as it allows systems to adapt and evolve without losing their identity.

Autopoiesis, cognition, and language

From a cognitive perspective, autopoiesis is a fundamental concept for understanding how living systems generate and maintain their own organization, giving rise to the phenomenon of "cognition". Maturana and Varela (2003) explain that cognition is not merely a reflection of an objective external world but rather an active process of meaning-making and sense construction that emerges from the very dynamics of living systems. In this sense, language assumes a central role as an essential cognitive tool.

Language is not merely a passive channel for transmitting information but an autonomous system for constructing and organizing knowledge and experience. Through language, individuals articulate, categorize, and make sense of their perceptions and experiences, establishing internal connections and relationships with their environment. Thus, language functions as a first-order cognitive mechanism that enables consensual coordination between individuals, facilitating both social interaction and the shared construction of reality.

Moreover, autopoiesis implies that the meaning generated through language is always relational and dependent on the system that produces it, reflecting its internal structures and organizational processes. Therefore, cognition and language are interdependent phenomena that mutually reinforce each other: language enables and enhances the cognitive complexity of living systems, while cognition continuously guides and shapes the development and evolution of language.

Ultimately, systemic autopoiesis and language are deeply intertwined in the constitution and reproduction of both living and social systems. Language not only serves as a medium for exchanging information but also functions as a structuring process that enables autopoietic systems to define, maintain, and transform their boundaries, adapt to their environment, and evolve without losing their fundamental identity. In the social sphere, as Maturana and Varela (1997) indicate, the autopoiesis of language allows societies not only to reproduce themselves but also to generate new realities through communication and symbolic exchange, reaffirming their autopoietic nature.

Systemic-functional linguistics

The *Systemic-Functional Linguistics* (SFL) theory developed by Michael Halliday provides a comprehensive analytical framework that integrates language as a resource for meaning-making in sociocultural contexts. Unlike more structural approaches, Halliday argues that language is a functional tool whose primary purpose is to create and maintain social relationships, develop ideas, and negotiate meanings within a given cultural system (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

Language as a semiotic resource

From a systemic-functional perspective, language is not merely a set of grammatical rules but a complex *semiotic system* in which meanings are continuously negotiated. Halliday, as cited by Eggins (2004), argues that this system has three main metafunctions: the "ideational", the "interpersonal", and the "textual". These three metafunctions interrelate to ultimately produce discourse.

According to Halliday, these metafunctions are understood as follows:

- **Ideational function:** This function reflects how language enables individuals to represent the external world and their internal experiences. Through this function, speakers can express processes, actions, events, and mental states. Halliday states that this function is related to the representation of reality, as language structures the experience of the world through what he calls processes, participants, and circumstances (Halliday, 1978).

- **Interpersonal function:** This function refers to the use of language as a means of social interaction. It allows speakers to adopt roles, influence others, and express attitudes and judgments. Halliday highlights that, through this function, power and solidarity relationships are negotiated, which is fundamental for understanding the pragmatic dimension of language in sociocultural contexts (Halliday, 2003).

- **Textual function:** The third function focuses on the internal organization of discourse, ensuring that language is coherent and cohesive. This includes elements such as reference, ellipsis, and thematic structure, which enable the text to be comprehensible within its context of production and reception (Thompson, 2014).

Context and metafunction

One of Halliday's most significant contributions is his emphasis on context as a key determinant of the function of language. According to systemic-functional theory, language operates within two contextual levels: the *context of situation* and the *context of culture* (Butt et al., 2000). The context of situation includes field, tenor, and mode, which refer respectively to what is happening, who is participating, and how communication is being

carried out. On the other hand, the context of culture represents the values, beliefs, and social practices that frame the use of language within a particular community.

Halliday introduces the concept of *metafunction* to refer to how the three previously mentioned functions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) operate simultaneously within any instance of language use. These metafunctions are always present in communication and are interdependent, meaning they cannot be understood in isolation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

Language and power in SFL

One of the most critical and relevant aspects of this approach is the relationship between language and power. Through the interpersonal function of language, Halliday demonstrates that language is not only a means of communicating ideas and organizing experiences but also a fundamental instrument for structuring and maintaining social power relations. The theory proposes that linguistic choices are closely linked to social hierarchies and power dynamics within a community. This approach opens the door to a deeper understanding of how language is strategically used to influence, persuade, and consolidate relationships of dominance or subordination in different sociocultural contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

a. Interpersonal function and the exercise of power:

Within the framework of SFL, the interpersonal function of language allows speakers to negotiate social roles and power relations. Language is not neutral; rather, it is loaded with implicit meanings that reflect and perpetuate individuals' positions within a given social structure. Through the choice of pronouns, verb moods, speech acts, and grammatical structures, speakers express relationships of authority, solidarity, politeness, or aggression, among others. These elements reveal not only the content of a message but also the speaker's intent and the position they hold or wish to hold in a social interaction.

For example, the use of the imperative mood, such as "Do this," tends to establish a hierarchical relationship in which the speaker holds more power than the listener. In contrast, the use of an indirect interrogative form, such as "Could you do this?", softens the imposition and suggests a more equitable relationship, though it remains a request for action. Halliday argues that these linguistic choices are key to understanding the power relations inherent in communication, as they enable speakers to negotiate their position within a broader social structure (Eggins, 2004).

b. Language as a reproducer of ideologies:

Language also functions as a vehicle of ideology, reflecting and perpetuating the dominant belief systems within a society. According to Halliday, ideology is not merely a set of explicit beliefs; rather, it is embedded in the linguistic patterns used in everyday life. Grammatical structures and lexical choices do not merely convey information; they reinforce particular perspectives on the world, which are aligned with existing power positions (Halliday, 1978).

In this sense, SFL intersects with *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA), developed by theorists such as Norman Fairclough, who was influenced by Halliday's work. Fairclough (2006) argues that language is both a social practice and a form of power, and that texts are imbued with ideologies that serve the interests of specific social groups. The systemic-functional analysis helps to uncover how dominant ideologies are reflected in discursive practices and how these, in turn, reinforce existing power structures. For example, in political discourse, the words used to describe certain social groups (such as immigrants, ethnic minorities, or women) can reinforce stereotypes and legitimize exclusion or social control over these groups (Fairclough, 2006).

c. Power in institutional discourse:

One area where the relationship between language and power is particularly evident is institutional discourse. Halliday (1978) argues that institutions such as politics, education, and law rely on language to exercise and legitimize their authority. The texts produced by these institutions—ranging from laws to procedure manuals—do not merely communicate information; they also construct social realities, defining what is acceptable or unacceptable within a given context.

For example, in the legal field, the use of specialized and technical language creates a power barrier between those who possess knowledge of such language (lawyers, judges) and those who do not (the general public). Similarly, in the educational context, academic language can function as a mechanism of inclusion or exclusion, depending on students' ability to master it (Christie, 2002). In this way, institutions use language as a tool to reinforce their authority and maintain control over individuals.

d. Power in media communication:

Another crucial sphere where Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) reveals the relationship between language and power is the media. The media have the capacity to shape public opinion through the discursive choices they make. News reports, for example, do not simply inform about events; they also interpret them, influencing how the public perceives certain topics, actors, or events. Through lexical and grammatical selection, the media can highlight or downplay certain aspects of a story, which has significant implications for the social construction of reality.

The systemic-functional analysis allows for the examination of how the media exercise power by controlling the narrative of events. For example, in a comparative analysis of different media coverages, it is possible to observe how the same event, such as a protest, can be described using terms like "peaceful demonstrators" or "rioters", depending on the ideological stance of the media outlet. These linguistic choices are not neutral; rather, they reflect and reinforce political agendas that align with specific power structures (Thompson, 2014).

e. Resistance through language:

Finally, while language can be an instrument of power, it can also serve as a tool of resistance. Marginalized or subaltern groups often develop alternative discourses as a means to challenge and resist dominant power structures. This process of resistance is reflected in the *interpersonal function* of language, where speakers can negotiate new power relations by subverting established linguistic norms.

For example, the use of inclusive language or the reappropriation of pejorative terms by oppressed communities represents forms of resistance against dominant narratives. By appropriating and transforming language, these groups seek to redefine their identity and challenge the power relations that have marginalized them. This phenomenon can be analyzed through SFL, as it involves a conscious negotiation of linguistic functions to alter the balance of power within a given context (Halliday, 2003).

Applications in education and discourse analysis

Halliday's theory has had a significant impact in the field of education, particularly in language teaching. His focus on the functionality of language has influenced the development of pedagogical approaches centered on the teaching of discourse genres and critical literacy (Christie, 2002). Instead of merely teaching isolated grammatical rules, educators use the principles of SFL to help students understand how language operates in different contexts and discourse genres, empowering them to use language more effectively and critically.

n discourse analysis, SFL provides a powerful methodological tool to uncover how meanings are constructed in written and spoken texts. It allows for the examination of not only what is said but also how it is said and for what purpose, analyzing linguistic choices in relation to their situational and cultural context (Eggins, 2004).

In conclusion, Halliday's systemic-functional theory offers a comprehensive and dynamic view of language, emphasizing its role in the construction and maintenance of social reality. By integrating the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions within a systemic framework, Halliday presents language not as a static system of signs but as an adaptable resource that both reflects and shapes sociocultural relationships. This approach has revolutionized both linguistics and discourse analysis, providing a solid foundation for studying language as a key element in the construction of meanings and power relations across various communities.

Other considerations on the relevance of the systemic approach for Social Work

As has been observed so far, the systemic approach and its multiple theoretical derivations have fundamental relevance for the development of Social Work as a professional discipline within the social sciences. This approach provides a theoretical and methodological framework that allows for understanding the complexity of the sociocultural contexts in which social workers intervene. It facilitates a holistic and relational perspective of individuals and their environments, which is crucial for effective intervention in this discipline. Therefore, the application of systems theory to the profession enables various dimensions of understanding and intervention, which are explained below.

Dimensions of systemic understanding and intervention in Social Work

1. **Holistic understanding of problems**: The systemic approach helps social workers see individuals not as isolated entities but as part of broader systems (familial, community, social, economic, etc.). This perspective allows for identifying how different spheres of an individual's life are interconnected and how these connections can influence their well-being and that of the entire community with which they interact.

2. **Analysis of systemic interactions**: This approach enables professionals to analyze how various systems interact and affect individuals and groups with which they are interrelated. For example, it helps understand how changes in the family system can influence individual well-being or how social policies impact communities.

3. **Systemic interventions**: Based on an understanding of systemic dynamics and interactions, social workers can design interventions that not only address individuals but also modify systemic relationships and structures that contribute to their problems. This involves working not only with direct clients but also with their environment, seeking sustainable solutions within their life systems.

4. **Promotion of adaptability and change**: Systems theory acknowledges the ability of systems to adapt and change. In Social Work, this translates into fostering resilience and the capacity of individuals and systems to adjust to changing circumstances, thereby promoting long-term well-being.

5. **Systemic impact assessment**: The systemic approach also provides tools to evaluate how interventions affect different levels of the system, allowing social workers to adjust their practices based on feedback and observed outcomes.

6. **Preventive approach**: Finally, the systemic approach emphasizes the importance of prevention, enabling social workers to identify and address risk factors and vulnerabilities within systems before they escalate into more serious problems.

The systemic approach in the construction of Social Work

As can be seen, the systemic approach, with all its theoretical elements discussed, provides Social Work with a lens through which professionals can examine the interactions between individuals and the various systems they engage with, such as families, groups, communities, and broader social structures. The theory suggests that an individual cannot be fully understood without considering the context of the interconnected systems in which they are embedded. Therefore, this perspective is holistic and multidimensional, challenging the reductionist view that isolates the individual from their environment.

In this regard, authors such as Payne (1995) agree that the systemic approach provides Social Work with a framework for understanding the complexity of human situations and for planning interventions that take into account the multiple influences and interdependence of factors affecting individuals. For example, a social worker using systems theory can identify how a client's problems at school, at home, and in their community are interrelated, and how these systems influence their well-being.

Brueggemann (2014), like Payne, agrees that the systemic approach has played a significant role in the development of the Social Work discipline, particularly in how social workers have adopted system concepts to analyze the complexity of social interactions. This approach has been useful in conceptualizing problems by observing how individuals interact within various levels of social systems.

The author adds that system models have been integrated into Social Work because they allow for an understanding of how social systems either promote or hinder individuals' well-being. However, he also warns that these systems can dehumanize people by treating them as mere mechanical components within larger systems. Systems tend to simplify human thought, reducing autonomy and promoting generalized conformity, which can hinder the development of authentic relationships and social well-being (Brueggemann, 2014).

For their part, Schirmer and Michailakis (2019) argue that the systemic approach has been fundamental to Social Work by providing a holistic and relational understanding of individuals and the problems they face. Instead of viewing individuals in isolation from the world around them, this approach allows for the observation of how people are connected within complex social systems, helping social workers identify patterns and relationships that influence social issues. This enables a more comprehensive and contextual approach to addressing situations.

Furthermore, the authors point out that systems theory facilitates the identification and resolution of social problems by providing a theoretical framework that allows for the analysis of different perspectives (economic, political, scientific, etc.). This is especially relevant in Social Work, where issues are often multifaceted. The systemic approach also helps manage social inclusion and exclusion, enabling social workers to better understand how individuals are included or excluded within social systems (Schirmer & Michailakis, 2019).

Finally, the authors state that the systemic approach fosters critical thinking and theoretical flexibility in Social Work. It is not tied to any specific political ideology, which allows for social critiques based on the contingency of social conditions. By promoting autonomy between theory and practice, this approach enables social workers to avoid simplistic solutions and develop more effective and well-founded interventions (Schirmer & Michailakis, 2019).

Ultimately, systems theory is intrinsic to Social Work, as it provides a broad and in-depth perspective that allows for addressing the inherent complexity of social problems. Through this approach, it is possible to apply a comprehensive framework in both analysis and intervention, considering individuals not as isolated entities but as inherently social beings, part of interrelated psychosocial systems that range from the individual to the community and societal levels. Moreover, it acknowledges the reciprocal influence between individuals and the systems in which they live, highlighting how these structural and relational contexts shape their behaviors, opportunities, and overall well-being.

Memetic approach

The original memetic theory of Dawkins

The memetic approach was introduced in the 1970s by the British evolutionary biologist, ethologist, and zoologist Richard Dawkins in his influential work *El gen egoísta: Las bases biológicas de nuestra conducta* (1993) [The selfish gene: The biological basis of our behavior], where the author proposed a revolutionary theory to explain cultural evolution in parallel to biological evolution. Dawkins employed the term "meme" to illustrate the fundamental units of cultural transmission, analogous to genes in the biological domain. The term "meme" originates from the ancient Greek *mimema*, meaning "imitation" or "something imitated"; and Dawkins uses it to represent ideas, customs, beliefs, or practices that replicate and spread among individuals through imitation and communication, playing a key role in shaping human cultures (Dawkins, 1993).

Since it was inspired by Darwinian principles, Dawkins pointed out that, just as genes compete to replicate and survive in the gene pool, memes compete for space within human minds. This perspective suggests that culture is not merely a static set of knowledge and traditions but rather a dynamic and evolutionary process, in which successful ideas prevail and are transmitted over time, while less effective ones gradually disappear (Dawkins, 1993).

In general terms, Dawkins' theory proposes the central idea that *genes* are the fundamental units of natural selection in biological evolution. The author argues that, rather than individual organisms or groups, it is genes that serve as the true agents of selection, acting selfishly to ensure their own survival and replication (Dawkins, 1993).

In this regard, Dawkins presents the following fundamental aspects in his original work, which will be highly useful for a deeper understanding of the memetic approach proposed by the author:

1. **The selfish gene metaphor:** Dawkins proposes that organisms are temporary vehicles that exist to preserve and transmit their genes. The "selfish" genes seek to replicate and survive in future generations, and organisms are merely the means through which genes achieve this goal (Dawkins, 1993).

2. **Genetic selection vs. group selection:** The author criticizes theories suggesting that organisms act for the benefit of their species or group. Instead, he argues that altruistic behavior in organisms can be understood as a strategy to enhance the survival chances of their genes (Dawkins, 1993).

3. **Altruism and kinship:** Dawkins introduces the concept of kin selection, where apparent altruism toward other individuals, particularly relatives, can be explained by shared genetic material. By helping a close relative, an organism is indirectly increasing the survival of its own genes (Dawkins, 1993).

4. **Replicators and early evolution:** In the early stages of life, Dawkins suggests that the first self-replicating molecules formed the foundation of evolution. These molecules competed with one another to reproduce, and over time, the most efficient and stable ones were naturally selected (Dawkins, 1993).

5. **"Memes" as cultural replicators:** Finally, Dawkins expands his theory of genetic replication to include "memes," cultural units that, like genes, can replicate and transmit from one mind to another. As mentioned, for the author, memes are ideas, customs, and behaviors that spread in a society and compete to be "replicated" within culture (Dawkins, 1993).

The continuation of Dawkins' work

Another important author in the development of the memetic approach is the British psychologist Susan Blackmore, who continues Dawkins' work in her book *La máquina de los memes* (2000) [The meme machine]. In this book, she focuses more than her predecessor on the idea that "memes" are elements of cultural information that are transmitted among human beings primarily through *imitation*. For the author, these are units of transmission that can range from ideas to melodies, customs, or behaviors, and their ability to replicate depends on their success in being imitated by others.

For Blackmore, a meme can be anything that spreads from one mind to another through imitation. This includes anything from a word, a story, or a song to more complex behaviors such as religion or fashion. She emphasizes that memes do not need to be useful or have value for those who transmit them; what matters is their ability to replicate. In other words, they can spread regardless of their truthfulness or relevance (Blackmore, 2000).

Regarding their formation, the author argues that memes arise from the variation and recombination of previous memes. This process can occur at an individual level, when a person combines ideas and transforms them, or at a collective level, when the transmission of a meme undergoes variations as it is told or adapted by different people. In this way, memes can mutate and evolve, much like genes, and those that replicate most successfully are the ones that survive (Blackmore, 2000).

Therefore, for this author, the functioning of a meme is based on its ability to capture attention and be imitated. Memes that have a greater emotional impact or resonate with people's experiences and emotions tend to spread more. Blackmore also introduces

the concept of "memeplexes" (from the English *meme complexes*), which refers to a group of memes that mutually support each other for replication, as seen in religions or ideologies (Blackmore, 2000).

The meme as a sociocultural virus

In his book *Thought contagion: How belief spreads through society* (1996), author Aaron Lynch explores the concept of "memes" and their role in the spread and evolution of beliefs in society, as proposed by Dawkins, presenting them as units of cultural information that replicate and propagate among human populations in a manner analogous to biological contagions or viruses. Lynch expands on memetic theory and proposes a comprehensive framework for understanding how ideas are transmitted and evolve, focusing on the mechanisms that allow them to persist and spread.

For the author, memes are ideas or beliefs that spread because they are designed to induce their retransmission, similar to how a virus spreads in a biological environment. Memes can influence people to transmit them to others, contributing to the expansion of ideas over time (Lynch, 1996).

Modes of memetic propagation

Lynch presents several modes through which ideas propagate via memes (Lynch, 1996):

- **Quantitative parental mode**: Ideas that promote having more children tend to expand more rapidly, as seen in the case of the Amish, who reject modern technology and rely on having large families to sustain their way of life (Lynch, 1996).

- **Efficient parental mode**: Family beliefs that facilitate the successful transmission of ideas to the next generation. For example, separatist groups like the Amish transmit their beliefs more effectively by keeping their children isolated from external influences (Lynch, 1996).

- **Proselytic mode**: Ideas that spread quickly through the conversion of new people, not just offspring but also friends and others. This mode is crucial for the rapid expansion of religions and ideological movements (Lynch, 1996).

- **Preservational mode**: Ideas that promote their retention among adherents for long periods, preventing abandonment or conversion to other beliefs (Lynch, 1996).

- **Adversative mode**: Ideas that not only promote their expansion but also attack and weaken competing ideas, such as certain religious beliefs that justify violence against non-believers to spread their doctrine (Lynch, 1996).

- **Cognitive mode**: Some ideas are perceived as more logical or reasonable, making them easier to adopt and retain among individuals who view them as coherent (Lynch, 1996).

- **Motivational mode**: Some ideas are adopted because individuals believe they will benefit from adopting them, as seen in the case of anti-tax protest movements (Lynch, 1996).

The analogy with biological viruses

As mentioned before, Lynch argues that memes operate analogously to biological viruses, replicating from one mind to another through processes similar to the spread of diseases (Lynch, 1996). Just as a virus propagates by using an organism to reproduce and spread to others, memes use the human mind to ensure their diffusion, exerting an influence that is often unconscious to the individuals who transmit them.

This parallel with viruses is reinforced by the fact that some memes are particularly effective at "infecting" individuals by appealing to powerful emotions such as fear or urgency. Lynch argues that ideas that generate a sense of imminent threat or an overwhelming need to share information are more likely to spread rapidly, as they drive their carriers to transmit them more frequently (Lynch, 1996). From this perspective, memes not only shape personal beliefs but also induce behaviors that favor their own replication, creating, according to the author, a cycle of cultural transmission that resembles the contagion process of a disease.

The impact of memes/viruses on society

Lynch's work delves deeply into how memes influence not only the formation of individual beliefs but also the evolution and structure of societies as a whole. By analyzing their impact in areas such as politics, religion, and economics, the author aims to demonstrate that memes function as powerful forces capable of directing the course of social movements, consolidating ideologies, and even influencing the creation of public policies (Lynch, 1996).

In the political sphere, memes can spread ideas that either strengthen or weaken movements, shaping public opinion and influencing the course of elections and governmental decisions. From this perspective, in religion, for example, memes propagate through proselytism or the preservation of beliefs that foster cohesion among followers. Even in the economy, memes can influence the adoption of economic models or shape consumer behavior. Lynch argues that these memetic processes are essential for understanding how societies construct their cultural structures, determining which ideas survive, spread, or alter the course of social development based on their ability to replicate and adapt (Lynch, 1996).

Viral memetic evolution

Similar to how biological evolution is based on natural selection, Lynch's concept of viral memetic evolution is grounded in the ability of the most successful memes to spread

and adapt within a cultural environment (Lynch, 1996). Thus, memes that manage to transmit more efficiently—whether through their capacity to resonate emotionally, their social relevance, or their ease of comprehension—tend to prevail over others that fail to achieve the same level of dissemination. These successful memes not only survive but also transform and generate new variations or combinations as they adapt to different social contexts or new generations.

This dynamic process of adaptation and replication gives rise to what Lynch describes as cultural evolution, where ideas, beliefs, and behaviors are continuously shaped and transformed through social interaction, driving change and cultural diversity (Lynch, 1996). Thus, memes are not static; their constant evolution reflects and reinforces the dynamics of change within societies, much like successful genes ensure survival and variability in biological organisms.

Practical applications of viral memetics

Finally, Lynch's particular memetic approach is not only based on a theoretical concept but also has profound practical implications in various fields such as politics, religious conflicts, education, and health, among others (Lynch, 1996). By understanding how ideas spread, decision-makers and researchers can identify diffusion patterns that allow them to predict social behavior and act accordingly.

In politics, this understanding can be key to analyzing how ideologies gain traction among the electorate and how certain movements can be either countered or reinforced. In the realm of religious conflicts, understanding the "viral" mechanisms through which beliefs spread can aid in mediating or mitigating tensions between opposing groups. Similarly, in education and health, the spread of ideas can influence public decisions on issues such as vaccination, the adoption of healthy habits, or the implementation of educational reforms. By anticipating how certain beliefs may expand, it becomes possible to design strategic interventions that promote ideas beneficial to social well-being or curb the dissemination of harmful memes.

Critique of Lynch's approach

Without detracting from the intriguing nature of Lynch's approach, a criticism that can be made of his theoretical proposition is that it tends to focus on the harmful and manipulative aspects of memetic transmission, overlooking the potential positive contributions it can have in sociocultural construction. By describing memes as *viruses*, the author primarily emphasizes how ideas spread in a contagious and self-replicating manner, highlighting that they do so through mechanisms that can induce irrational, conflictive, or even dangerous behaviors, as seen in cases of religious violence or the proliferation of destructive beliefs. However, this perspective is limited and unilateral, as it does not deeply consider the benefits that memes can contribute to social and cultural development.

One of the key points that could be raised is that by focusing on the *parasitic* properties of memes, Lynch seems to overlook the fundamental role they play in fostering social cohesion, transmitting positive values, and driving cultural innovation. While the analogy with viruses can be useful in certain analytical contexts, it may also be seen as reductive, as it implies that ideas spread indiscriminately and often harmfully, without considering the

adaptive and constructive contexts in which many memes operate. For instance, social movements advocating for human rights, equality, or justice can also be understood as memes, yet their impact has largely been positive in advancing societal progress.

From a more balanced perspective, one could argue that memes do not merely function as *infections* that manipulate people's minds but also contribute to the development of more resilient and progressive communities. The spread of ideas such as cooperation, solidarity, and respect for cultural diversity has facilitated the evolution of more inclusive societies. This demonstrates that memes are not merely vehicles for conflictive or adversarial ideas but can also serve to advance ethical and philosophical principles that have been crucial for peaceful coexistence and human well-being.

Furthermore, Lynch's approach could be enriched by considering that meme transmission also involves deliberate and conscious processes of learning and adaptation. Unlike biological viruses, which invade without consent, many memes are critically and reflectively adopted by individuals. Therefore, reducing memes to a mere *contagion* phenomenon may oversimplify the complexity of cultural and social learning, where individuals actively participate in selecting and adopting beliefs and values they deem beneficial for themselves and their communities.

Cultural evolution through memes

In his work *The electric meme: A new theory of how we think* (2002), biological anthropologist Robert Aunger explores memetic theory from a more neutral and scientific perspective compared to authors like Lynch, who, as previously discussed, tend to describe memes in a more negative light. Although Aunger employs the metaphor of the *virus of the mind* to explain how memes spread and replicate, he does not adopt an exclusively negative stance. Rather than condemning memes as parasites that harm their hosts, he focuses on understanding them as cultural replicators that follow evolutionary principles similar to those of genes (Aunger, 2002).

At this point, the author presents a provocative hypothesis: memes are not merely units of cultural information but also agents that pursue their own replication, often in conflict with the interests of their human hosts. While Aunger begins by defining memes as cultural units of information that function as *replicators*—just as originally proposed by Dawkins, where memes, like genes, replicate through cultural transmission, spreading from one mind to another via communication and social learning—he expands this perspective. He argues that although memes have been vaguely described in the past under this exclusive paradigm, it is now essential to delve deeper into their precise mechanisms of operation (Aunger, 2002).

In this sense, this perspective acknowledges the original premise that memes are units of cultural information that reside in brains and use those brains specifically for replication. However, they achieve this through mediums such as spoken language, books, or cultural artifacts (audio recordings, posters, images, etc.), thereby attaining a form of evolutionary functionality that enables them to replicate and influence sociocultural construction. This process involves adhering to components present in the receiving mind, incorporating them into their informational structure before replicating again in another mind.

At this point, Aunger emphasizes that memes do not literally transfer from one brain to another; rather, he argues that they utilize signals such as words or symbols, which help them reconstruct themselves within the mind of each recipient and modify before being transmitted again (Aunger, 2002).

According to Aunger, the functioning of memes is an indirect process: a meme uses a transmission medium (such as a verbal or visual signal) to jump between brains. Once inside a new brain, it reconstructs itself using the materials already present in that mind. This means that memes are not merely exact copies; rather, they can undergo transformations depending on the context and the receiving mind. The author also argues that memes have evolved to exploit external artifacts and media, allowing them to increase their longevity and accuracy in replication (Aunger, 2002). In this way, memes can be stored in books, audio recordings, or other technological media, enabling them to continue replicating even when they are not actively present in a human mind.

In summary, Aunger describes memes as cultural replicators that form and spread through social interaction and the use of signals, functioning by utilizing mental resources to reconstruct themselves in new minds. This process allows them to influence human behavior and drive cultural evolution.

Cultural DNA and memes

The concept of Cultural DNA was developed by philosopher and cognitive sciences scholar Kate Distin in her book *El meme egoísta* (2005) [The selfish meme], a key contribution that expanded Dawkins' memetic theory by offering a direct analogy with biological DNA. Her aim was to explain how cultural information is preserved and transmitted across generations in a precise and structured manner. This concept allows the author to formulate a theoretical framework that delves into the mechanisms underlying cultural evolution, exploring how memes, like genes, operate within a system of replication, variation, and selection.

What is Cultural DNA?

Distin posits that memes—understood as units of cultural information—require a mechanism to preserve and transmit that information, analogous to how DNA functions in preserving and transmitting genetic information in biology. Just as DNA serves as the code containing the genetic information necessary for replication and the expression of an organism's phenotypic traits, Cultural DNA is the structure that enables the preservation, replication, and manifestation of the representational contents that constitute memes (Distin, 2005).

Analogy with biological DNA

This author argues that, just like biological DNA, Cultural DNA must fulfill two main functions:

- **Preserving information:** Memes, like genes, must be able to store information in a coherent and lasting manner to ensure replication. Without a foundation that allows for the preservation of cultural information, memes would not be able to persist over time or influence human behavior (Distin, 2005).

- **Exerting phenotypic effects:** The information contained in memes must manifest in some way within the cultural environment. Memes must be capable of influencing individuals' actions, thoughts, or behaviors in order to be selected and replicated (Distin, 2005).

Representation and transmission of Cultural DNA

Within the characteristics of the Cultural DNA concept, Distin introduces the idea of *representational content* as the theoretical equivalent of biological DNA. This concept is crucial because it defines memes not merely as abstract ideas but as carriers of specific information that can be encoded, transmitted, and replicated in human brains. According to the author, the representational content of a meme is what allows its cultural information to be copied and preserved over time (Distin, 2005).

This representational content is not merely superficial data; it encompasses the set of ideas, values, concepts, and behaviors that memes transmit and that can be interpreted and reconfigured by the minds that receive them (Distin, 2005). Just as DNA contains the instructions for protein formation in organisms, the representational content of a meme holds the instructions that guide behavior and thought within the cultural domain.

Distin also argues that, just as biological DNA is *transmitted* from generation to generation, Cultural DNA—that is, the representational content of memes—is *transmitted* from brain to brain through imitation, teaching, language, and other means of cultural communication. The fidelity of this transmission is crucial: memes that replicate more accurately and adapt more effectively to their environment are the ones that survive and spread most widely (Distin, 2005).

The idea of memetic replication implies that memes must preserve their representational content while adapting to new cultural environments, much like DNA enables genetic variation within a relatively stable structure (Distin, 2005).

Selection and cultural variation

Just as in biology, culture is subject to a *selection process* in which certain memes survive and "replicate" more successfully than others. Distin points out that this cultural selection is based on memes' ability to capture human attention and produce significant effects within the social and cultural environment (Distin, 2005).

For example, certain memes (such as ideas, fashions, songs, or skills) may be more attractive or "sticky" in terms of cultural attention and, therefore, have greater memetic fecundity. The selection of memes, much like in biology, depends on their suitability to the environment and their ability to replicate effectively within the cultural landscape.

In this context, Distin emphasizes that *variation* is another essential factor in the evolutionary process of "cultural replication". Memes do not replicate identically in all cases; on the contrary, they can be modified and adapted to new circumstances or contexts,

driving cultural evolution. However, the author also points out that the "representational content" of memes must maintain a certain degree of stability to ensure coherent replication over time (Distin, 2005).

In this sense, the author argues that Cultural DNA functions as an organizational structure that allows memes to vary without completely losing their identity. In this way, new versions of a meme remain recognizable as such. This balance between replication fidelity and adaptive capacity is what enables cultural evolution without descending into chaos (Distin, 2005).

The importance of Cultural DNA

Based on the above, Distin considers the concept of Cultural DNA a fundamental element in her theoretical framework, as it provides an effective perspective for understanding the organization and transmission of cultural complexity. By defining memes as carriers of representational content that function as a transmissible code, the author establishes a theoretical framework that allows for the explanation of:

a. How culture can accumulate knowledge and evolve.

b. How complex ideas and concepts can replicate without losing coherence.

c. How the interaction between memes generates broader and more complex cultural structures.

This approach allows for the integration of elements from biology and philosophy to account for cultural transmission from an evolutionary perspective, while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of the human mind in the process of memetic replication (Distin, 2005).

Media memetic communication

In the work *Communicating with memes: Consequences in post-truth civilization* (2019), author Grant Kien introduces a new theoretical element that had not been explored in depth in previous studies on memes: the concept of memetic communication within the context of the contemporary digital media ecosystem, specifically in relation to social networks and their impact on post-truth civilization.

Characteristics of the concept of "memetic communication" according to Kien

This theoretical concept refers to a new form of communication that has emerged in the 21st century, facilitated by the digital environment. Kien explains that while all languages and much of traditional communication can be considered "memetic" in a basic sense (i.e., self-replicating and evolutionary, according to Dawkins), not all communication

becomes memetic within the media context. In his framework, memetic communication is distinguished by its ability to replicate across various media, transform its form, and generate cultural effects on an unprecedented scale (Kien, 2019).

This author states that the ideas of the prominent communication theorist Harold Innis (1894–1952) served as a starting point for developing his theory on contemporary memetic communication. Innis (1991), recognized for his focus on media as determining forces in 20th-century civilizational changes, introduced the theoretical concepts of "time-binding" and "space-binding" to analyze how traditional media influenced the temporal and spatial organization of societies. In this line, Kien argues that the development of current digital networks and memetic communication is driving a profound new civilizational shift, comparable to the transformation brought about by the technological innovations originally studied by Innis in the early 20th century (Kien, 2019).

Kien also introduces the idea that memetic communication in *digital media* differs from *traditional communication* in that it does not merely transmit information but evolves, spreads exponentially, and generates feedback loops that can have unpredictable consequences in society. This approach emphasizes the speed and power that memes have acquired in the age of social networks, where they are not only consumed but also produced and modified by users [prosumers] (Kien, 2019).

Another novel theoretical concept is "disconnection", which expands on the communication categories described by Innis (1991). Kien suggests that in *today's digital ecosystem*, communication is no longer bound by *time* or *space* in the same way as traditional media. This disconnection refers to the ability of digital communication to transcend physical and temporal limitations, spreading instantly on a global scale (Kien, 2019).

In this context, it becomes evident that the Internet and social media era has triggered a globalized communicational phenomenon that is unprecedented in human history. This new landscape demands a critical reassessment of many previous certainties and assumptions about how communicative processes unfold and how human relationships are structured. What was once considered stable and predictable in terms of social interaction is now revealed to be fluid, complex, and in constant transformation.

Consequently, merely adapting traditional models to new digital platforms is no longer sufficient; rather, as Kien argues, it is essential to rethink in depth the categories, theories, and methods used to understand communication and the construction of human connections. Moreover, this process requires an exploration of the ethical, cultural, and psychological implications of living in an intensely interconnected reality.

General conclusions of the memetic approach

In conclusion, the memetic approach is based on the premise that cultural evolution can be explained through fundamental units known as *memes*, which are equivalent to *genes* in biology. These are units of cultural information that can replicate and compete for space in human minds, evolving and adapting over time. This approach suggests that culture is not static, but rather a dynamic process in which only the most effective ideas survive and are transmitted.

Imitation stands out as the primary mechanism through which memes spread. These can be ideas, behaviors, or customs that propagate regardless of their utility or truthfulness. Concepts such as *memeplexes* describe how groups of memes reinforce one another to increase their chances of replication within culture.

The memetic approach has also been compared to *viral transmission*, where ideas spread using strategies similar to biological contagion. This analysis highlights how ideas replicate, induce their retransmission, and compete for survival within a cultural environment, often appealing to powerful emotions to ensure their dissemination.

The concept of *memetic replication* expands to include the idea that memes utilize technological resources and signals, such as words and symbols, to transmit and reconstruct themselves in new minds. Their evolution is not considered static, as memes can undergo transformations and adaptations depending on the context and the receiving mind.

Additionally, an analogy with biological DNA is proposed to explain how memes preserve and transmit cultural information in a structured manner. It is suggested that memes function as carriers of *representational content*, guiding cultural behavior and thought in a way similar to how DNA regulates the characteristics of organisms.

In today's *digital context*, memes have been observed to transform communication, making it more dynamic and exponential, with significant effects on society. The feedback loops among social media users enable memes to be not only consumed but also created and modified, challenging traditional forms of idea dissemination.

Taken together, these theoretical ideas suggest that *memes* are powerful forces that shape beliefs, behaviors, and social structures. Their ability to replicate and evolve allows them to significantly influence cultural evolution, driving both social cohesion and innovation, while simultaneously reflecting the changing dynamics of society.

Ecosystemic approach

The systems within systems approach

The ecosystemic approach is based on a complex and holistic understanding of human behavior, emphasizing the interconnection between individuals and the systems that surround them. Unlike linear and one-dimensional approaches, this model is grounded in systems theory, cybernetics, and ecology, proposing that human beings cannot be understood in isolation but rather as an integral part of a broader network of interconnected systems and subsystems (Moore et al., 2017).

This approach finds its roots primarily in family therapy, where therapists began to view families as dynamic systems and consider how communication patterns and relationships within the group influenced each member's behavior. Through this perspective, human interaction is conceptualized as a continuous exchange process, in which both individuals and broader social systems mutually affect and are affected by one another. Structural and strategic therapy, in particular, were based on these ideas, but the ecosystemic

approach evolved beyond these techniques to incorporate a broader perspective on the therapist's role, viewing them not only as an observer but also as an active participant within the system (Moore et al., 2017).

A distinctive characteristic of the ecosystemic approach is its rejection of traditional Newtonian thinking, which is based on linear causality and the objective observation of behavior. Instead, it adopts principles from constructivism and second-order cybernetics, emphasizing that knowledge and reality are not merely discovered but rather co-constructed through the interactions between the observer and the observed system (Moore et al., 2017). This epistemological shift acknowledges that human beings actively participate in the creation of their realities, and that these realities are shaped not only by individual perceptions but also by social and cultural interactions.

The ecosystemic approach also introduces the idea of human systems' autonomy. Each individual or subsystem is conceived as operating within a broader context while maintaining a certain degree of independence in their meaning structures and actions. However, this autonomy does not imply isolation, as systems are constantly influenced by other systems, creating a network of interdependencies that defines their functioning and adaptation (Moore et al., 2017). This concept is key to understanding how narratives and social dynamics can be altered not only from an internal perspective but also through external influences that shape and transform these systems.

A central figure in the development of the ecosystemic approach was the biologist, anthropologist, and social scientist Gregory Bateson (1987). His theoretical work has been fundamental in conceptualizing relational patterns and the organization of phenomena in the world. His perspective on communication and how meanings are shared and transformed within systems has directly influenced the understanding of human ecosystem dynamics. Bateson contributed a vision of systems as living entities, in which interactions are not merely automatic responses but active processes of meaning-making and adaptation.

In his aforementioned work, *Steps to an ecology of mind* (1987), Bateson presents the ecosystemic approach as an essential perspective for understanding the human mind and the interactions of ideas in both individual and social contexts. The author argues that ideas do not exist in isolation but rather form part of an interconnected system, where each concept is influenced by others within its environment. This way of thinking highlights the importance of analyzing how ideas are generated, evolve, and persist, not only in terms of their content but also by considering their interaction with the environment in which they develop—similar to how organisms interact with their ecosystems (Bateson, 1987).

Furthermore, the author emphasizes that the ecosystemic approach allows for a critical examination of how perceptions of reality are selected and shaped. This process of selecting and editing reality, based on an individual's beliefs and epistemologies, creates a filter through which the world is interpreted. It is argued that fundamental belief change can only occur when individuals encounter cognitive dissonance, forcing them to reconsider their perceptions of the environment. From this perspective, epistemic change becomes an inevitable process when existing belief systems can no longer be reconciled with observed experience (Bateson, 1987).

In another of his works, *Mind and nature: A necessary unity* (1979), Bateson explores the interconnection and relationship between all elements of nature and the human mind. The author argues that the mind is not limited to an individual's internal processes but rather manifests as part of a broader network of interconnected systems, encompassing

both living beings and inanimate elements. For Bateson, nature and the mind share organizational patterns and processes of change that are fundamental to understanding evolution and learning. He suggests that these patterns of connection form the foundation of all knowledge, and that the mind is an integral and reflective part of this larger network, spanning from individual organisms to entire ecosystems.

In this sense, Bateson's ecosystemic approach challenges traditional notions of separation between humans and the natural world, instead proposing a unified perspective in which the mind extends across different levels of ecological systems. He argues that evolution and mental processes follow similar rules, and that it is through the interaction and feedback between these systems that the dynamics enabling change and adaptation emerge. The author emphasizes the importance of recognizing these patterns to achieve a deeper and more holistic understanding of the world, advocating for an epistemology that not only observes individual parts but also considers how they connect within an interdependent whole (Bateson, 1979).

Today, the ecosystemic approach has expanded beyond psychology and therapy to influence education, research, and the social sciences. In the educational field, it promotes an inclusive and collaborative vision of learning, where students and educators co-construct knowledge within a social and cultural context. In research, this approach rejects the idea of a single, objective reality, instead proposing an exploration of multiple realities constructed through the interaction between the researcher and the system under study (Moore et al., 2017). This multidimensional perspective allows for a richer and more nuanced understanding of human experience, considering how cultural, social, and contextual influences intertwine in people's lives.

Within this framework, optimal functioning in the ecosystemic approach is described as a dynamic balance between systems and their components, characterized by openness to new experiences and the capacity for adaptation. Healthy systems are those that can evolve toward higher levels of complexity, whereas closed systems tend to become trapped in repetitive and rigid patterns, limiting their ability to adapt and change (Moore et al., 2017).

In conclusion, the ecosystemic approach provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing human behavior and social interactions, viewing individuals as active participants within broader, interconnected systems. This perspective not only expands the understanding of psychology and the social sciences but also redefines the role of interveners and researchers as co-creators of knowledge, actively interacting with systems to promote change and development.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development

The ecological—or *bioecological*—theory of human development, proposed by Russian psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1987), is considered an ecosystemic theory and stands out as one of the most influential approaches for understanding how social environments and interpersonal relationships shape human development. This theory posits that an individual's development is influenced by multiple levels of environmental systems that

interact in a complex and dynamic manner.

From this perspective, the individual does not develop in isolation but is constantly influenced by a series of interrelated contexts, ranging from the closest and most immediate levels, such as family and school, to broader social and cultural structures that shape society as a whole. By conceptualizing these environments as ecological systems (or ecosystems), Bronfenbrenner highlights how each context uniquely contributes to development through bidirectional and reciprocal interaction processes between the individual and their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1987).

To capture the interaction between the individual and their environment, Bronfenbrenner develops a model composed of different *levels of systems* or *ecosystems* that collectively shape human development. These levels are organized in a hierarchical structure, ranging from the most immediate and close environments surrounding the individual to broader and more distant societal influences. Each ecosystem proposed by Bronfenbrenner—the "microsystem", "mesosystem", "exosystem", "macrosystem", and "chronosystem"—plays a crucial role in shaping behavior and experiences. This classification allows for a deeper understanding of how seemingly distant or indirect factors can have a significant impact on individual development, highlighting the importance of analyzing the social context as a whole to grasp the complexity of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1987).

1) Microsystem:

For Bronfenbrenner, the concept of the microsystem is defined as the most immediate and direct environment in which an individual interacts and develops. This level of the model consists of the social and physical structures with which the individual has direct and frequent contact, such as family, friends, school, and other similar contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1987). The microsystem is fundamental in the lives of children, as it is the space where daily interactions take place, significantly influencing their cognitive, emotional, and social development (Hayes et al., 2017).

The author describes the microsystem as a dynamic and bidirectional environment, in which both the individual and the environment mutually influence and are influenced by each other. These direct interactions are essential for development, as they allow the individual not only to receive stimuli and experiences from the environment but also to actively participate in shaping it (Hayes et al., 2017). For example, in a family setting, a child's behavior can influence the emotional responses and actions of their parents, just as the attitudes and behaviors of parents can, in turn, shape the child's development.

In practice, the microsystem is the primary setting where human beings, from infancy, begin to develop social skills, build their identity, and establish behavioral patterns that may persist throughout their lives. Bronfenbrenner emphasizes that the quality of interactions within the microsystem is crucial for a child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1987). These interactions can be both positive and negative, and their impact depends on factors such as emotional support, communication levels, and the nature of relationships established with individuals in this immediate environment (Hayes et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the microsystem is not limited to a single context but encompasses multiple environments in which the individual actively participates from childhood, such as school, home, and peer groups. Each of these contexts provides unique opportunities for development and presents specific challenges that can shape a child's growth trajectory. For

example, in a school setting, a child interacts with peers and educators, allowing them to develop academic, social, and problem-solving skills. In contrast, within the home environment, interactions with family members may focus more on emotional support, value formation, and the development of a sense of belonging and security (Hayes et al., 2017).

Bronfenbrenner also highlights the importance of support and consistency across different microsystems. If a child experiences consistency and emotional support both at home and in school, they are more likely to develop a positive self-image and resilient skills to face challenges. Conversely, if there are significant discrepancies or a lack of support in these environments, the child may experience difficulties in their emotional and social development (Bronfenbrenner, 1987).

2) Mesosystem:

The mesosystem, according to Bronfenbrenner's (1987) model, refers to the level of interaction that emerges from the connections and relationships between the different microsystems in which an individual participates. Unlike the microsystem, which focuses on the immediate environments where the individual interacts directly, the mesosystem examines how these environments communicate with each other and the impact of these interactions on personal development. Essentially, the mesosystem functions as a system of systems, linking the various settings of an individual's daily life into a cohesive network of interrelated influences.

The mesosystem is crucial because it acknowledges that human development does not occur in a single isolated context, but rather results from the dynamic interaction between multiple significant environments. For example, a strong relationship between a child's family and school can lead to a more positive and coherent educational experience. When parents are actively involved in school activities, regularly communicate with teachers, and participate in the child's learning, a bridge is created between home and school, facilitating the child's adaptation and academic performance (Hayes et al., 2017).

The quality of the connections within the mesosystem can either amplify or mitigate the experiences an individual has within each microsystem. If a child experiences consistent support and communication between their home and school environment, they are more likely to develop greater self-confidence and stronger social skills that will benefit them throughout life. However, if there is disconnection or conflict between these settings—for example, if parents and teachers have contradictory approaches to discipline or learning—the child may experience confusion and stress, which could hinder their socioemotional and academic development (Hayes et al., 2017).

Bronfenbrenner emphasizes that the mesosystem also encompasses relationships between other significant contexts in a child's life, such as the family environment and peer groups, or the community and school. Each of these connections plays a role in how the child perceives and responds to their world (Bronfenbrenner, 1987). For example, the influence of a peer group within the school environment can extend into the child's family life, affecting their relationships and behavior at home. Similarly, the expectations and shared values of the community can shape the norms and practices within the school, reinforcing certain behaviors and attitudes in children (Hayes et al., 2017).

A central aspect of the mesosystem is its bidirectional and reciprocal nature. An

individual's experiences and behaviors in one microsystem can influence other microsystems, and these mutual influences become interwoven and reinforced (Hayes et al., 2017). For example, a child who receives recognition at school may carry that sense of achievement into their home environment, strengthening their relationship with family and motivating them to become more involved in their academic life. Conversely, if a child faces difficulties at home, such as family conflicts, these tensions are likely to be reflected in their school performance and behavior.

The concept of the mesosystem thus highlights the importance of consistent and coherent connections between the different environments in which an individual develops (Hayes et al., 2017). Bronfenbrenner argues that a lack of coordination and communication between these environments can weaken the overall support a child needs to thrive in life. In this sense, educators and parents working together to understand and support a child's needs and development are essential for creating a healthy and effective mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1987).

3) Exosystem:

The exosystem refers to contexts and environments that, while not directly including the individual as an active participant, exert a significant influence on their development and experiences within their microsystems. Unlike the microsystem and mesosystem, the exosystem is not a setting where the individual directly interacts, but rather a collection of environments that affect their life indirectly, through their impact on the people and circumstances that are part of their daily surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1987).

According to Bronfenbrenner, and from his biopsychosocial approach to child development, the exosystem includes elements such as parents' workplaces, social and community networks, labor policies, mass media, and other social systems that influence the well-being and emotional stability of the adults close to the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1987). For example, a stressful or highly demanding work environment for a parent can have indirect effects on the child, as the stress experienced by the adult at work may impact their emotional availability, time, and quality of interaction at home. Similarly, a parent's job loss can affect the family's financial well-being, which, in turn, influences the stability and emotional atmosphere in which the child is raised.

Bronfenbrenner emphasizes that the power of the exosystem lies in how these external contexts shape the experiences and opportunities available to the child within their immediate environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1987). For example, educational and social policies established by local or national authorities are part of the exosystem and have a direct impact on the quality and accessibility of educational and healthcare services available to the child. Similarly, the implementation of a community support program for low-income families may not be something in which the child actively participates, but its existence significantly improves the conditions in which they develop, providing additional resources that facilitate their growth and learning (Hayes et al., 2017).

The nature of the exosystem highlights how decisions and events occurring at a broader level, beyond the immediate control of the individual and their family, can have profound and lasting effects on their development. Within this framework, the exosystem also includes the influence of mass media and social networks on the individual. For example, while a young child may not directly engage in politics or social debates, the attitudes

and beliefs promoted by these media can shape family conversations, influence adult beliefs, and ultimately affect the perceptions and values the child develops regarding their social and cultural environment (Hayes et al., 2017).

Ultimately, the analysis of the exosystem in Bronfenbrenner's model highlights the complexity of interactions between an individual's immediate and more distant environments. It acknowledges that to fully understand a person's development, it is necessary to consider not only direct experiences but also the external forces that shape those experiences. This approach enables professionals to adopt a broader and more contextualized perspective on human development, addressing factors that extend beyond immediate relationships to include systemic and structural influences, which also play a crucial role in shaping an individual's life.

4) Macrosystem:

The macrosystem is defined by Bronfenbrenner (1987) as the broadest and most encompassing level of the environment that influences an individual's development, consisting of cultural values, beliefs, norms, ideologies, and social patterns that prevail in a society. This level of the model does not refer to a specific physical context in which the individual interacts but rather to the broader cultural and social structures that shape and influence all other systems in which the person is embedded.

The macrosystem, therefore, serves as the contextual framework within which individuals' lives unfold, influencing their experiences, expectations, and the opportunities available to them. It is composed of dominant cultural beliefs, political ideologies, social norms, and general attitudes toward issues such as education, family, gender, religion, and social welfare. These cultural and structural elements shape how experiences within the microsystems, mesosystems, and exosystems are perceived, establishing the boundaries of what is considered possible or acceptable within society (Hayes et al., 2017).

Bronfenbrenner emphasizes that the macrosystem is not merely a static set of values and beliefs, but rather a dynamic context that varies across time and space and can differ significantly between different cultures and subcultures (Bronfenbrenner, 1987). For example, in some cultures, education is highly valued, and early learning is strongly encouraged, which is reflected in robust educational policies and significant community support for educational institutions. In contrast, in other cultures, formal education may not hold the same level of importance, with a greater emphasis placed on practical learning or life skills development.

The influence of the macrosystem becomes evident in how cultural norms and values shape interactions and expectations within an individual's immediate environments. For example, a society that values gender equality will promote household and school practices that encourage equal opportunities for both boys and girls. These beliefs and values influence how adults in these contexts raise and educate children, which in turn affects their developmental opportunities as well as their sense of identity and belonging throughout their lives (Hayes et al., 2017).

Additionally, the macrosystem also encompasses political ideologies and economic beliefs that shape social policies and institutional structures. These policies can have a direct impact on an individual's access to resources such as education, healthcare, and social services (Hayes et al., 2017).

5) Chronosystem:

Finally, for Bronfenbrenner, the chronosystem represents the temporal dimension that permeates all levels of the model, influencing how the other systems—microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem—affect an individual's development over time. The chronosystem refers to the changes and transitions that occur in a person's life, both at the individual level and within broader social and historical contexts, and how these temporal events impact human development (Hayes et al., 2017).

The chronosystem encompasses two main types of temporal influences (Hayes et al., 2017):

- Changes and transitions that occur throughout an individual's life cycle.
- Social and historical changes that affect an entire generation or society.

In the first case, the chronosystem considers how personal experiences—such as starting school, moving to a new home, losing a loved one, transitioning into adolescence, or beginning a new job—can shape an individual's developmental trajectory. These experiences are evaluated based on their duration, frequency, and sequence, as these factors influence how a person adapts and responds to new circumstances (Hayes et al., 2017).

On the other hand, the chronosystem also considers broader historical and social events that impact entire generations, such as wars, economic crises, technological advancements, or social and cultural movements. Although these events are external to the individual, they have the power to reshape the norms and values of the macrosystem, as well as the opportunities and challenges present in an individual's microsystems and exosystems (Hayes et al., 2017). For example, the rise of digital technology and global connectivity has transformed how children learn, communicate, and interact today, influencing not only their immediate environment but also their expectations and skills for the future.

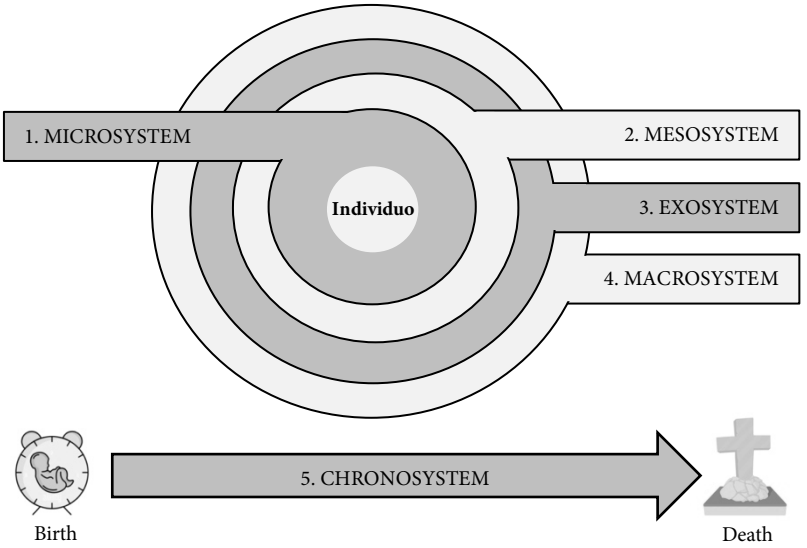
Bronfenbrenner emphasizes the importance of time in development, as he not only considers how current events shape development but also how the timing of these events is crucial to understanding their impact. A significant life change, such as parental divorce, can have different effects depending on the stage of development in which the child experiences it. A divorce during early childhood may influence a child's emotional and social development differently than if it occurs during adolescence, when parental relationships and personal identity are in a different stage of formation (Hayes et al., 2017).

The chronosystem also highlights the importance of normative and non-normative transitions in a person's life. Normative transitions are those that occur in an expected and predictable manner within the life cycle, such as starting school or retirement. In contrast, non-normative transitions include unexpected events, such as sudden job loss or a natural disaster. These experiences can lead to significant adjustments in an individual's life and impact their well-being and development in ways that depend on their ability to adapt to these circumstances (Hayes et al., 2017).

Finally, one of the most innovative aspects of the chronosystem in Bronfenbrenner's model is its emphasis on the concept of *macrotime*, which refers to how historical trends and changes in the socioeconomic and political context influence entire generations.

This approach helps explain how shared experiences among groups of people within the same historical period can shape their values, beliefs, and behaviors, as well as the policies and cultural practices that impact education, family, and work (Hayes et al., 2017).

Urie Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model



Applicability of Bronfenbrenner's model to Social Work

As can be observed, Urie Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, originally designed to study child development, offers a comprehensive and systemic perspective that can be effectively extrapolated to analyze sociocultural dynamics in broader contexts. Its theoretical structure, composed of interconnected and hierarchical systems, provides a robust tool for understanding the complexity of social, economic, and cultural relationships that shape the development of individuals and groups across multiple contexts. The extrapolation of this model into a more general approach for sociocultural analysis enables a perspective that transcends the boundaries of child development, allowing for a deeper understanding of the interaction of multiple levels of influence in society.

The bioecological model and its applicability to sociocultural analysis

The bioecological model is organized around the idea that human development does not occur in isolation but rather within a context of interdependent systems that range

from the immediate and tangible to the more distant and intangible. These systems include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem, which interact in a dynamic and continuous process. By applying this theoretical framework to sociocultural analysis in Social Work, it becomes possible to explore how structural and contextual influences shape both individual behavior and social practices, revealing patterns and trajectories of change and stability over time.

a. Microsystem and mesosystem: Spaces of direct interaction

In the context of Social Work, the microsystem can be analyzed as the set of direct interactions that individuals have within their immediate environment, such as family, friends, coworkers, and educational institutions. At this level, face-to-face relationships and communication patterns emerge, directly impacting the construction of identity, sense of belonging, and development of social competencies. These interactions not only influence individuals in the present but also shape how they respond to broader social situations.

The mesosystem, in turn, represents the interconnection between different microsystems, meaning how experiences and relationships in one environment are linked to and influence those in another. For example, a Social Work professional intervening in a family conflict considers not only intrafamilial dynamics but also how difficulties in the workplace or educational settings may impact the situation. This integrative approach allows for a more comprehensive assessment and a more effective intervention, recognizing that development and behavior do not occur in isolated compartments but rather within a complex network of influences.

b. Exosystem: Indirect influences on everyday life

The exosystem encompasses contexts that do not directly affect the individual but influence their immediate environment, such as public policies, mass media, and social networks. In sociocultural analysis, this level is crucial for understanding how decisions made at structural or institutional levels have an indirect impact on communities and on the practice of Social Work. For example, a change in labor legislation may alter the economic conditions of a community, which in turn affects family stability and the educational opportunities available to the individuals within it.

Bronfenbrenner (1987) points out that influences at this level can be subtle yet powerful, as they shape the conditions under which everyday processes unfold within the microsystem and mesosystem. From a sociocultural perspective, this approach emphasizes the importance of an analysis that does not focus solely on visible interactions, but also considers how broader structures establish the framework for individual and collective experiences and behaviors.

c. Macrosystem: Ideologies and cultural values

The macrosystem includes the values, beliefs, traditions, and cultural norms that permeate and shape the other systems. When extrapolating this concept to the sociocultural development analysis in Social Work, it becomes evident how dominant ideologies

and social discourses shape the perception and interpretation of social reality. The macrosystem is the level where narratives are formed, guiding social norms and expectations, influencing intervention practices and the construction of social policies.

In this sense, Social Work is embedded within a broader cultural context that shapes both professional beliefs and intervention strategies. The ability of professionals to critically analyze this macrosystem and its influence on social practices is essential for developing interventions that not only address individuals' immediate needs but also promote structural-level transformations.

d. Chronosystem: Temporal dynamics in sociocultural development

Finally, the chronosystem refers to changes and transitions over time, both at the individual and societal levels. In sociocultural analysis, this component allows for the examination of how historical events, technological changes, and social transformations affect people's lives and the structure of communities across generations. The chronosystem perspective in Social Work is essential for understanding how individuals' life trajectories are influenced by temporal events, such as economic crises, social movements, or technological advancements, which redefine the social and cultural structures in which they operate.

In conclusion, extrapolating Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model to the analysis of sociocultural development in disciplines such as Social Work enables a holistic approach that integrates multiple levels of influence within a coherent and dynamic theoretical framework. By recognizing that human and social development results from the continuous interaction between interconnected systems, this approach provides a solid foundation for understanding and addressing the complex social, cultural, and economic dynamics that shape contemporary realities. This systemic and multilevel perspective is particularly valuable for professionals in the field, who face the challenge of intervening in complex problems that require a deep understanding of the interactions between individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

Psychosocial change approach

A broad theoretical perspective

The psychosocial change approach refers to a comprehensive theoretical perspective that considers the transformation of social and psychological structures affecting individuals and groups within a society. This process encompasses the evolution of norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors, which, once internalized by individuals, influence their perception of the world and their actions within it. In this sense, analyzing this approach requires considering both the social and psychological components that facilitate or hinder change, as well as the theories and models that explain these processes.

In general terms, psychosocial change is a phenomenon that occurs at the intersection of individual psychological processes and social influences. From this perspective, change is not perceived solely as an alteration in behaviors or social structures, but also as a transformation in how individuals interpret and assign meaning to their experiences and roles within a specific social context (Jost, 2006). Thus, this approach recognizes the importance of shared meanings and how they can be reconfigured in response to new social, political, or economic conditions.

One of the critical factors in psychosocial change is the role of *social identity* and how individuals perceive themselves in relation to the groups they belong to. According to Tajfel and Turner (2004), social identity theory suggests that people tend to shape their behavior based on the norms and values of their reference groups. Therefore, a shift in group dynamics can lead to a reconfiguration of individual identity, which in turn influences how individuals respond to social transformation.

Furthermore, the approach to attitude and belief change, based on Festinger's (1962) cognitive dissonance theory, plays a central role in this perspective. According to Festinger, individuals experience internal tension when they perceive inconsistency between their beliefs, behaviors, and the values or social norms around them. This dissonance drives them to make adjustments to restore cognitive balance. This adjustment process serves as a key mechanism for understanding how psychosocial changes occur in response to social pressures and the integration of new information.

One of the most influential models in this field is the Transtheoretical Model by Prochaska and DiClemente (1983), which proposes that change occurs through a series of stages: *precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action,* and *maintenance*. This model is particularly relevant as it highlights the non-linear nature of psychosocial change, suggesting that individuals may move back and forth between stages before achieving a stable transformation in their behavior and thinking. Progression through these stages is influenced by both internal factors (such as motivation and self-efficacy) and external factors (such as social support and contextual conditions).

Despite the presence of facilitating factors, psychosocial change can encounter significant resistance. Lewin (1951), in his Field Theory, conceptualizes change as a balance between driving forces and resisting forces. According to Lewin, for change to occur, a process of *unfreezing* is necessary, where current beliefs and behaviors must be destabilized. This is followed by a *change* phase, in which new patterns are introduced, and finally, a *refreezing* phase, where these new patterns become solidified as the new norm.

Among the most common barriers to psychosocial change are individual resistance, often driven by fear of the unknown or loss of control, as well as structural barriers within the social environment that reinforce traditional practices and beliefs. The role of culture, social norms, and existing prejudices can contribute to social inertia, making it more difficult to adopt new ideas and behaviors.

The understanding of psychosocial change has significant implications for interventions in the field of social sciences and, more specifically, in Social Work. Effective professional interventions must consider not only individual factors but also group dynamics and social structures that influence human behavior. From the bioecological approach, for instance, it is emphasized that change must be addressed at multiple levels of analysis, including the individual, family, community, and broader societal institutions (Bronfenbrenner, 1987).

In this sense, the psychosocial change approach requires a holistic intervention that considers both internal (psychological) and external (social) dynamics of individuals. Within this framework, intervention strategies that incorporate the use of narratives and the reconstruction of meanings are particularly powerful, as they enable individuals to redefine their experiences and roles within the context of broader change (White & Epston, 1993).

Social change as a living process according to Sztompka's sociology

According to Polish sociologist Piotr Sztompka, in his work *Sociología del cambio social* (1995) [The sociology of social change], social change should be seen as a constant phenomenon throughout history, challenging the idea that social structures are static or immutable. For the author, understanding social change is essential to grasp the very essence of collective life, as everything in society is in continuous motion, evolution, and transformation.

In his analysis, Sztompka employs a variety of models and concepts to examine social change. One of the approaches he highlights is the organic metaphor, inherited from classical sociology, which compares society to a biological organism. Just like a living being, society has an internal structure that is in a constant process of adaptation and evolution. However, Sztompka also acknowledges the limitations of this perspective, noting that the rigidity of traditional systemic models does not always fully capture the dynamic and fluid nature of social change (Sztompka, 1995).

Sztompka, therefore, introduces the idea of society as a *dynamic social field*, a concept that moves away from a static and rigid view of change, focusing instead on a more flexible and fluid perspective. For the author, society is not a solid and fixed entity, but rather a set of interrelated processes, where interactions, beliefs, norms, and actions are continuously and complexly intertwined. In this sense, social change is perceived as a constant flow of transformations, manifesting through ideas, institutions, relationships, and the opportunities that emerge within the social fabric (Sztompka, 1995).

From his critical perspective, Sztompka challenges the deterministic and mechanistic views that have dominated much of sociological thought, such as evolutionism and historical materialism. He rejects the notion that social change is an inevitable and linear process, arguing instead that history is shaped by human agency, through the decisions and actions taken by individuals and groups within specific contexts (Sztompka, 1995). This approach emphasizes the importance of contingency and the openness of the future, suggesting that social change results from a complex interplay of human intentions, circumstances, and external forces.

Additionally, Sztompka explores the fundamental role that ideas and norms play as drivers of social change. He argues that ideas have the power to transform reality, as they shape beliefs, attitudes, and human behaviors. Social norms, on the other hand, function as guidelines for collective behavior but are also susceptible to innovation and reinterpretation when confronted with new realities and challenges (Sztompka, 1995).

Ultimately, social change, according to Sztompka, is not a phenomenon that occurs in isolation or moves in a single direction. Rather, it is a complex and multifaceted process that can be driven by various forces, including social movements, revolutions, and the actions of notable individuals (Sztompka, 1995). These collective actors and individual figures play a decisive role in challenging the status quo, questioning established norms, and proposing new forms of organization and ways of life in society.

The Delta Theory of psychosocial change by Tharp

General aspects of the theory

In the book *Delta Theory and psychosocial systems: The practice of influence and change* (2012), renowned American scholar Roland G. Tharp presents a unified psychosocial theory—the Delta Theory—to explain how human change occurs through social influence. Tharp integrates concepts from various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, evolutionary theory, philosophy, neuropsychology, cognitive sciences, and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, to provide a comprehensive explanation of how influence is exerted and resisted.

Psychosocial change, viewed through the lens of Tharp's Delta Theory, emerges as a complex and multidimensional force, deeply rooted in the dynamics of psychosocial systems that shape the social fabric of human life. For the author, change is not an isolated or random phenomenon; rather, it is the result of a meticulous process that operates through constant interaction and mutual influence between individuals and their social contexts (Tharp, 2012).

Tharp proposes that change occurs almost exclusively within and through psychosocial systems, which he defines as groups of people who share common values, purposes, and activities. These systems are neither static nor homogeneous; rather, they exist in a constant state of flux, oscillating between three critical phases: Beta, Alpha, and Delta, each of which describes a particular state of balance or imbalance within the social system (Tharp, 2012).

1. Beta phase

The Beta Phase, according to Tharp, represents a state of balance and stability within a psychosocial system. In this phase, social interactions and group dynamics exist in a state of harmony and consistency, where the norms, values, and behaviors of the system tend to remain stable and predictable. The author describes this phase as the manifestation of a social organization that has reached a point where its behavioral patterns are regular and oriented toward continuity and resistance to change (Tharp, 2012).

In the Beta Phase, the psychosocial system is designed to perpetuate its stability. This state is comparable to a form of social homeostasis, where each member of the group knows and accepts their role within the system, facilitating cohesion and predictability in interactions. The bonds between individuals are reinforced through the repetition of shared activities and the exchange of common symbols and language, which strengthen

intersubjectivity—the ability of members to share a common interpretation of reality and a coherent system of values (Tharp, 2012).

Tharp emphasizes that this phase is not merely a passive state, but rather requires an active force to maintain balance and prevent disruption. The stability of the Beta Phase is upheld by a series of conservative forces that work to prevent changes that could destabilize the system. This includes repairing misunderstandings, resolving minor conflicts, and the constant reaffirmation of social and emotional bonds within the group (Tharp, 2012).

Despite this tendency toward stability, it is recognized that a system in the Beta Phase is not entirely immune to external influences or internal crises that may push it into the Alpha Phase of imbalance. However, the Beta Phase is fundamental as it provides a foundation from which interventions for change can be planned. Agents of influence seeking to initiate change within a psychosocial system must be aware that, when in the Beta Phase, the system will naturally resist any attempt to alter its pre-established patterns. This resistance to change is seen as both a protective and limiting force, ensuring the continuity of the system while also hindering innovation and adaptation to new circumstances (Tharp, 2012).

2. Alpha phase

The Alpha Phase is a state of imbalance and instability within a psychosocial system. This phase is characterized by the disruption of the stability previously achieved in the Beta Phase, leading to a series of changes and reactions within the group that affect both its internal relationships and organizational structure. Tharp describes the Alpha Phase as a moment of crisis, where the norms and values that previously held the system together are disrupted by external forces or internal conflicts that challenge the established order (Tharp, 2012).

In the Alpha Phase, the psychosocial system experiences a form of controlled chaos. The bonds that once united the group members begin to weaken, and tensions and frictions become evident in daily interactions. This state of imbalance is not merely a temporary disorder but rather an opportunity for significant change. Tharp argues that the Alpha Phase is essentially a transitional phase, where the system has the potential to restructure and evolve into new forms of organization, provided that the influences and interventions are appropriate and effective (Tharp, 2012).

The author emphasizes that the Alpha Phase is not a stable condition and is therefore transitory by nature. A psychosocial system, due to its natural tendency toward homeostasis, will attempt to restore a new balance, either by returning to the Beta Phase or moving toward the Delta Phase if conditions allow for positive change. This restoration process can be driven by the intervention of external agents, who may take advantage of the system's state of vulnerability to implement structural or behavioral changes (Tharp, 2012).

What makes the Alpha Phase particularly interesting is that it represents a moment when the system is more receptive to influence and change. Tharp suggests that change agents should be especially attentive during this phase, as the system becomes more flexible and open to reorganizing its behavioral patterns and internal relationships. However, he also warns that if not managed properly, the Alpha Phase can lead to regression or system collapse rather than a positive evolution toward a new stability (Tharp, 2012).

Essentially, the Alpha Phase in Tharp's theory represents a critical turning point for any psychosocial system. It is a stage in which challenges and internal dissonances can trigger either the deterioration or the renewal of the system, depending on how tensions are managed and how interventions are structured to guide change. This deep understanding of the Alpha Phase is crucial for designing truly effective and sustainable change strategies, recognizing the inherent opportunity in chaos and the potential to transform crisis into a moment of growth and development.

3. Delta phase

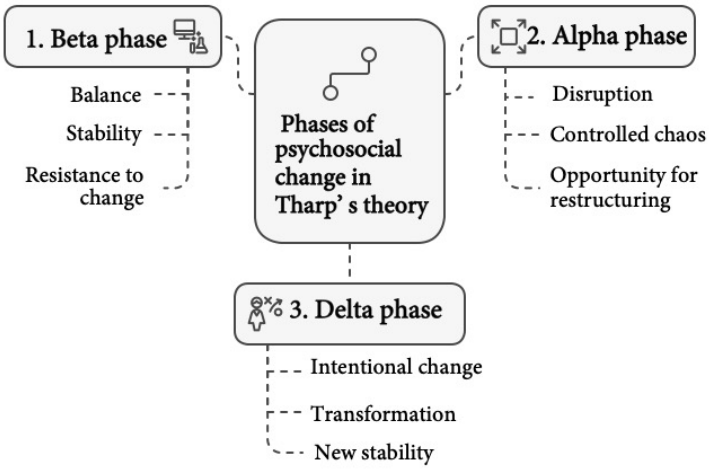
The Delta Phase, as conceptualized by Tharp, represents the state of intentional and transformative change within a psychosocial system. This phase is defined by its focus on reorganization and reconfiguration of social dynamics, where the system's forces mobilize to produce a significant and lasting change. The author describes the Delta Phase as the moment when the system, after experiencing the tensions of the Alpha Phase, is ready to adopt new structures, behaviors, and forms of interaction that not only modify its current state but also establish a new adaptive stability (Tharp, 2012).

The Delta Phase does not occur spontaneously; rather, it is the result of strategic interventions designed to guide the system toward a conscious and deliberate evolution. According to Tharp, change in this phase is constructed through a structured process that employs tools and techniques of influence, such as behavior modeling, contingency management, continuous feedback, and the creation of new norms that guide the actions of system members (Tharp, 2012). These mechanisms are implemented to trigger a transformation that aligns with the specific objectives of change and to ensure that new dynamics are sustainably integrated into the group's daily life.

What distinguishes the Delta Phase from the previous phases is its focus on system plasticity. During this phase, the psychosocial system is not only receptive to change but also actively seeks to reconfigure its own patterns and structures. Tharp emphasizes that the Delta Phase is a period of great openness and creative potential, where the constraints and limitations of the Beta Phase have been lifted, and the dissonances of the Alpha Phase have been harnessed to generate new opportunities. It is in this phase that narratives and relationships within the group can be redefined, allowing for the emergence of new forms of cooperation and understanding (Tharp, 2012).

Tharp also highlights that the Delta Phase involves a high degree of agency from both individuals and change agents involved in the process. Leaders, therapists, educators, or any influential figures working within the system play a crucial role in guiding this process toward a new stability. They must be able to identify opportunities within the chaos of the Alpha Phase and channel those forces toward positive growth, helping the system not only adapt but also undergo profound transformation (Tharp, 2012).

In summary, the Delta Phase represents the culmination of the change cycle within Tharp's theory—a moment in which the psychosocial system restructures and redefines itself, achieving a new form of balance that is not only more resilient but also better aligned with the current goals and aspirations of its members. Understanding this phase is essential for designing intervention strategies that not only adapt to change but also lead it, transforming it into a meaningful and sustainable process.



The phenomenon of psychosocial change from the perspective of Delta Theory

For Tharp, the key to psychosocial change lies in the ability of an influence agent to mobilize the internal forces of a psychosocial system and reorganize its components into a *Delta* state. This agent—whether a therapist, teacher, community leader, or even a family member—must be able to diagnose the phase in which the system currently exists and apply precise interventions that lead to sustainable change (Tharp, 2012). By using tools such as task structuring, behavior modeling, and contingency management, the agent guides the system toward a new stability, where the achieved transformations are consolidated and integrated into daily life.

Tharp's approach also acknowledges the importance of interpersonal relationships and intersubjectivity in the process of change. According to his theory, the true driving force behind change is the creation of shared meanings and the alignment of values and goals through joint activities (Tharp, 2012). This interaction is not merely the sum of individual efforts, but rather an emergent phenomenon that arises when people engage in a common purpose, achieving transformation at both the individual and collective levels.

Ultimately, Tharp does not view psychosocial change as a phenomenon that occurs in isolation, but rather as a deeply social and relational process. His Delta Theory offers a holistic perspective, integrating disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and cognitive sciences to unravel the mechanisms underlying influence and change (Tharp, 2012). Beyond being a practical theory, Tharp's proposal is an invitation to understand change not only as an achievable goal but as a continuous practice that unfolds through human interaction and the constant reconfiguration of psychosocial systems.

In Tharp's work, change is not merely the result of individual will or chance; rather, it is a complex dance unfolding on the stage of social life, where each step is guided by the laws of the psychosocial system and the subtle hand of intersubjective influence.

III PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC APPROACHES

The cognitive-behavioral approach

Since its inception, psychology has been understood in various ways, depending on where and when it developed. In the United States, it was initially shaped by philosophy, focusing on theoretical concepts such as the "self" and consciousness. Meanwhile, in Europe, psychology took a different direction, relying on scientific methods to experimentally study mental processes such as memory and perception. During these early explorations of the discipline, introspection was a key tool; however, its subjective nature ultimately limited the "objectivity" of research. This opened the door to the emergence of behaviorism, a paradigm shift driven by the experiments of Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov, which focused on studying observable behavior as a more objective way to understand the mind.

As the 20th century progressed, interest in mental processes regained momentum. This led to the emergence of cognitive psychology, which drew inspiration from Gestalt psychology and was enriched by information-processing analogies, partly due to advancements in computer science. This new approach not only revolutionized psychological research but also had a profound impact on psychotherapy, leading to the development of evidence-based therapies such as Cognitive Therapy (CT) and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT). These new therapeutic models moved away from Freudian ideas and focused on helping individuals live more fulfilling and satisfying lives, introducing modern intervention methods that challenged traditional psychoanalytic concepts.

Main pioneers of therapeutic cognitive psychology

Cognitive psychotherapy has been one of the most significant innovations in the field of clinical psychology, and its development is owed to the contributions of several pioneers who laid the foundation for its evolution. Among the most prominent figures in this field are Aaron T. Beck, Albert Ellis, and Donald Meichenbaum, whose theories and therapeutic approaches have profoundly influenced the understanding and treatment of mental disorders. The following is an analysis of the contributions of these influential thinkers, briefly exploring their key insights and how they have shaped the contemporary cognitive-behavioral approach.

Aaron T. Beck: The architect of cognitive therapy

Aaron T. Beck is recognized as the principal founder of cognitive psychotherapy, and his work has been crucial to the development of this therapeutic approach. Originally trained as a psychoanalytic psychiatrist, Beck began to question traditional psychoanalytic ideas through his research on depression. Rather than focusing on unconscious conflicts, Beck became interested in how negative thought patterns contributed to depression and other emotional disorders (Beck et al., 2010).

Beck's fundamental concept is that negative automatic thoughts and irrational beliefs are the primary factors that perpetuate negative emotional states. He developed the cognitive model of depression, which posits that depressed individuals tend to view the world, themselves, and the future negatively, forming the well-known "cognitive triad" (Beck et al., 2010). His approach focuses on identifying and modifying these distorted thoughts to alter emotional and behavioral responses, laying the foundation for cognitive restructuring.

Albert Ellis: The creator of rational emotive behavior therapy

Albert Ellis is another pioneer in the field of cognitive therapy, known for developing *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* (REBT), one of the first approaches to integrate cognitive and behavioral psychology. Ellis proposed that emotions are not directly caused by events, but rather by the beliefs and attitudes people hold about those events (Ellis et al., 1997). His famous ABC model explains how an activating event or *adversity* (A) triggers a *belief* (B), which in turn leads to an emotional and behavioral *consequence* (C).

Ellis introduced the idea that many of the beliefs people hold are irrational and dysfunctional, leading to intense negative emotions and self-destructive behaviors. Through the questioning and disputing of these irrational beliefs, REBT helps clients develop a more rational and balanced way of thinking (Ellis et al., 1997). This approach not only focuses on changing maladaptive beliefs but also on promoting a life philosophy that encourages acceptance and personal growth.

Donald Meichenbaum: The innovator of cognitive-behavioral therapy

Donald Meichenbaum is another influential pioneer who has made significant contributions to the development of cognitive therapy, particularly through his work on stress inoculation training and cognitive self-instruction. Meichenbaum (1977) introduced the idea that a person's thoughts and internal dialogue play a crucial role in how they respond to stressful and challenging situations.

His therapeutic approach focuses on teaching clients to use positive self-talk as a tool for managing stress and emotional difficulties. Meichenbaum's stress inoculation training technique involves preparing individuals to effectively face and resist stress, by teaching cognitive and behavioral skills to anticipate and manage stress responses (Meichenbaum, 1985). This approach has been particularly effective in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other stress-related issues.

Collective contributions and their impact on cognitive therapy

The contributions of Aaron T. Beck, Albert Ellis, and Donald Meichenbaum have provided a solid theoretical and practical foundation for the development of cognitive therapy and its variations. While Beck primarily focused on changing automatic thoughts and core beliefs through cognitive restructuring, Ellis introduced the importance of challenging irrational beliefs and developing a rational life philosophy. Meanwhile, Meichenbaum contributed the dimension of internal dialogue and coping skills to the therapeutic approach (Hernández, 2014).

These pioneers not only laid the foundation for cognitive therapy, but they also influenced a wide range of therapeutic interventions that are used today to treat various conditions, including anxiety, depression, and stress management. Their work has given rise to a therapeutic approach that is dynamic, evidence-based, and focused on empowering individuals to change their thought and behavioral patterns (Hernández, 2014).

Beck, Ellis, and Meichenbaum have profoundly transformed the field of clinical psychology. Their theories and therapeutic methods continue to be fundamental in the treatment of mental disorders and the enhancement of emotional well-being. Through their innovations, they have provided effective tools for individuals to challenge and change their thought patterns, paving the way for a more balanced and meaningful life.

Relationship between thought, emotion, and behavior

Within the cognitive-behavioral approach, the relationship between *thought*, *emotion*, and *behavior* is understood as a dynamic and bidirectional interaction, in which each of these elements deeply influences the others and is, in turn, influenced by them. From this perspective, it is asserted that the thoughts a person generates in response to a specific event are what drive their emotions and behavior in that situation. It is not the events themselves that determine how someone experiences emotions or reacts, but rather the way in which that person interprets and makes sense of those events that truly shapes their emotional experience and actions. It is within these interpretations, often automatic and unconscious, where the key lies to understanding how an individual connects to and responds to the world around them (Beck et al., 2010; Ellis et al., 1997).

As the ancient stoic philosopher Epictetus (2018) stated:

> It is not things that trouble men, but their opinions about them… (p. 13).

Epictetus was a Greek Stoic philosopher from the 1st century AD, born a slave in Hierapolis (modern-day Turkey). After gaining his freedom in Rome, he taught Stoic philosophy, emphasizing self-discipline and internal control in the face of adversity. His teachings, compiled by his disciple Arrian, had a profound influence on the development of Stoicism.

In the philosopher's words, we can clearly perceive the echoes of the fundamental principles that underpin cognitive-behavioral therapy. Epictetus, like Stoic thought as a whole, maintained that it is not external events themselves that determine a person's emotional state or behavioral responses, but rather the way those events are interpreted. According to this perspective, what truly defines how an individual feels and reacts is not what happens around them, but how they perceive, evaluate, and believe about those events. It is these internal interpretations, shaped by their beliefs and perceptions, that ultimately dictate their emotional experience and the way they choose to act in response to reality. This idea strongly resonates with the cognitive-behavioral approach, which also emphasizes the power of the mind to shape emotions and behaviors through the filter of personal interpretations.

In this context, it was Beck who first developed the concept of *Cognitive Therapy*, based on the idea that distorted or irrational thoughts are the root cause of negative emotions and dysfunctional behaviors. From his perspective, when a person misinterprets a casual comment from a friend as harsh criticism, they are likely to feel hurt (emotion) and, as a result, withdraw socially (behavior)—even though the original intent and content of the comment did not justify such an extreme reaction. Beck highlighted how these misinterpretations can shape the way a person experiences emotions and responds to their environment, becoming the core of thought patterns that profoundly impact emotional well-being (Beck et al., 2010).

Ellis, through his Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), placed a strong emphasis on how a person's beliefs about events can trigger irrational or unhealthy emotional and behavioral reactions.

With his A-B-C model, Ellis logically illustrates this process, where:

- "A" represents the activating event,
- "B" symbolizes the belief about that event, and
- "C" corresponds to the resulting emotional and behavioral consequence.

According to this therapeutic approach, if one can identify and transform *irrational beliefs* (B), it is possible to significantly modify *emotions* and *behaviors* (C), allowing individuals to respond in a more balanced and adaptive way to the situations they face in everyday life (Ellis et al., 1997).

For example, consider the case of "María", who has recently begun experiencing episodes of anxiety:

- *Situation (A):* María has to present a project in front of her colleagues next week.

- *Thought/Belief (B):* She thinks, "I'm going to stutter and forget what I have to say! Everyone will think I'm incompetent!"

- *Emotion and Behavior (C):* This thought or belief triggers intense feelings of *anxiety* and *fear* in María. As a result, she decides to *avoid* the presentation at all costs, asking a colleague to replace her at the last minute. Ultimately, this avoidance reinforces her unfounded belief in her supposed *personal inability*, further exacerbating her distress.

In this case, the mere anticipation of a social situation triggers a cascade of *automatic negative thoughts* in María about her own performance and how others might perceive her. These thoughts not only *increase her anxiety* but also directly influence her *behavior*, leading her to avoid the situation she fears. Within the context of mental health, this cycle of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors can become a pattern that reinforces and perpetuates her anxiety, gradually limiting her ability to face similar situations in the future. As this pattern repeats, María's life becomes increasingly restricted, making it more difficult to break the vicious cycle that distances her from social experiences that could be neutral or even positive, but which her mind anticipates with fear.

Cognitive therapy would focus on helping María challenge and change her unfounded catastrophic thoughts (in this case: *"I'm going to stutter and forget what I have to say. Everyone will think I'm incompetent"*). This process involves gradually dismantling these beliefs and developing anxiety management strategies, ultimately improving her psychological well-being and her ability to handle situations that trigger emotional distress.

Cognitive therapy would focus on guiding María to challenge and transform the catastrophic and unfounded thoughts that torment her, such as: "I'm going to stutter and forget what I have to say! Everyone will think I'm incompetent!" The goal would be to gradually dismantle these distorted perceptions, helping her develop more realistic and self-compassionate ways of thinking. Additionally, the therapeutic approach would aim to equip her with effective anxiety management strategies, improving not only her emotional well-being but also her ability to face situations with confidence that currently cause her significant distress. Through this process, María could regain control over her life, building a stronger foundation for managing her emotions and responding in a more balanced and adaptive way to future challenges.

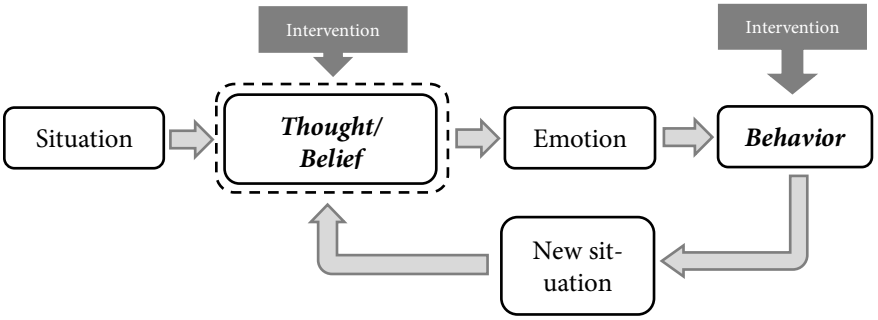
In turn, the comprehensive approach of *cognitive-behavioral therapy* is based on the understanding that behaviors and emotions are deeply influenced by learning and past experiences. Through *classical conditioning*, individuals can learn to associate certain stimuli with emotional responses; for example, a negative experience in a social situation can lead to anxiety whenever they face a similar context (Pavlov, 1997). Additionally, *operant conditioning* suggests that the consequences of behaviors—whether reinforcements or punishments—affect the likelihood of their recurrence. If a person experiences rejection in a social setting, the negative emotional response acts as a punishment, increasing the probability that they will avoid similar situations in the future (Skinner, 2014).

Finally, the concept of *social learning* proposed by Albert Bandura (1999) introduces an important analytical component, emphasizing that individuals acquire knowledge and behaviors primarily through the observation of others. When a person witnesses someone else being rejected, they may develop the belief that such an interaction entails a similar risk for themselves. This observational process contributes to the formation of dysfunctional beliefs about both oneself and one's social abilities, profoundly affecting emotions such as anxiety or low self-esteem and triggering avoidance patterns that perpetuate the problem.

For Bandura, this learning process develops primarily through *modeling*, a form of vicarious learning in which an individual acquires knowledge by observing others perform specific behaviors. Modeling becomes particularly powerful when the observer identifies with the person they are watching, reinforcing their own self-efficacy beliefs and motivating them to persist in similar tasks, even in the face of challenges and difficulties. This process not only shapes the observer's behavior but also influences how they perceive their own abilities, encouraging them to overcome barriers and confront complex situations with greater confidence and determination (Bandura, 1999).

Below is a diagram that simply illustrates how the cognitive-behavioral approach conceptualizes the circular dynamic between *situation*, *thought/belief*, *emotion*, and *behavior*. This model not only highlights how these elements interact with one another but also explains the feedback mechanism that emerges from *thoughts/beliefs* and *behavior*, demonstrating how these influences can reinforce each other. Additionally, the diagram clearly identifies the specific points where the therapeutic model focuses its interventions, aiming

to disrupt and modify these dysfunctional patterns to promote a positive and lasting change in the individual's well-being:



The cognitive-behavioral approach posits a reciprocal relationship between *thoughts/beliefs*, *emotions*, and *behaviors*, emphasizing how these dimensions continuously influence one another. It places strong emphasis on the idea that interventions aimed at modifying irrational or distorted beliefs and thoughts can lead to significant and positive changes in emotions and, consequently, in behavior. At the same time, interventions focused on behavioral modification also exert a direct impact on the cognitive process, reinforcing the shift toward healthier and more adaptive thinking patterns (Hernández, 2014).

The effectiveness of this approach has been consistently supported, with multiple studies and meta-analyses demonstrating its efficacy in the treatment of disorders such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Significant changes in brain activity related to emotional regulation have been reliably observed following this type of psychological therapy (Hofmann et al., 2013).

Distinctions between “automatic thoughts” and “beliefs”

Within the cognitive approach, it is essential to differentiate between two fundamental concepts: *automatic thoughts* and *beliefs*. This distinction is crucial for fully understanding how emotions and behaviors are processed and shaped in individuals. Both types of thoughts play key roles in psychological experience, but they have distinct characteristics and functions that significantly influence how people perceive and respond to the world. Recognizing this distinction allows for a more precise identification of intervention points in the therapeutic process, acknowledging that while both deeply impact emotional well-being, they operate at different levels and require specific approaches.

1. Automatic thoughts or cognitions

In cognitive psychotherapy, *automatic thoughts* (or *cognitions*) and *beliefs* are differentiated primarily by their level of awareness and their permanence within a person's thought patterns. *Automatic thoughts* are those immediate impressions or reactions that arise spontaneously in response to a situation. They are fleeting, often involuntary, and may go unnoticed unless brought into conscious awareness. They function as rapid and specific responses to the moment which, although brief, can significantly influence emotions and behaviors. In contrast, *beliefs* are deeper, more ingrained convictions that persist over time and upon which an individual constructs their view of themselves, others, and the world. These beliefs serve as a stable frame of reference, shaping how experiences are interpreted and giving rise to automatic thoughts (Beck et al., 2010).

Consequently, while automatic thoughts are momentary, beliefs represent a more enduring foundation that influences the way an individual navigates their daily reality.

In this context, beginning with the first concept, *cognition* or *automatic thought* is specifically understood as:

> …a thought or an image that one may not be aware of unless attention is directed to it." Characteristically, a cognition is an evaluation of events made from any temporal perspective (past, present, or future). Typical cognitions observed in depression and other clinical issues are commonly referred to as automatic thoughts, which form part of a specific thought pattern. Except in certain well-defined situations (for example, an artist's or poet's attempt to expand the boundaries of reality), cognitions are usually interpreted by individuals as objective representations of reality and are therefore taken as true. Since cognitions are automatic, habitual, and credible, individuals rarely pause to test their validity (Beck et al., 2010, p. 142).

In simple terms, a cognition or automatic thought is thinking or imagining things automatically, without realizing it, unless the person focuses on identifying it. People generally judge what happens at any given moment as true, without questioning it—especially when they are feeling sad or experiencing other emotional disturbances.

A common example of this concept is when a person makes a small mistake, such as spilling a bit of coffee, and immediately thinks, "I'm a mess, I can't do anything right!" This type of thought arises instantly and reflects a negative self-evaluation that does not necessarily represent the reality of the situation.

In this sense, these cognitions or automatic thoughts can be identified based on the following characteristics (Burns, 2000):

- **Nature:** They are spontaneous and specific evaluations that occur in response to a particular situation. They arise involuntarily and may not be fully conscious at first.

- **Content:** They frequently focus on immediate concerns in the present moment and are related to specific situations.

- **Awareness:** Although they can be recognized through attention and reflection, they often go unnoticed due to their rapid and automatic nature.

- **Flexibility:** They are easier to modify or challenge once they are brought to awareness, due to their more superficial nature and direct connection to specific situations.

In this regard, Judith Beck (2006)—daughter of the renowned Aaron Beck—explains that:

> Typically, the therapist and the patient address automatic thoughts before working on beliefs. However, from the very beginning, the therapist begins to develop a conceptualization that always connects automatic thoughts to beliefs situated at deeper levels (p. 174).

2. Beliefs

"Beliefs", within this approach, are understood as *mental constructs* that reflect an individual's unique and personal interpretation of reality. These beliefs are not merely passive perceptions; on the contrary, they play an active and decisive role in shaping how a person thinks, feels, and acts in various circumstances (Beck, 2006). Within the framework of cognitive therapy, beliefs are considered key elements for understanding and addressing psychological disorders, as they directly influence emotional well-being and personal development. By modifying these deeply rooted beliefs, therapy aims to promote significant and lasting changes in how individuals experience their lives and face their challenges.

Judith Beck (2006) argues that beliefs can vary in nature, with some being specific and related to concrete situations, while others are more general and abstract, forming a hierarchical system that ranges from what she calls *intermediate beliefs*—more surface-level beliefs—to *core beliefs*, which are more deeply rooted in the individual's psychological structure. The latter—core beliefs—are fundamental convictions that a person holds about themselves, the world, and the future, and they are typically rigid and absolute. These beliefs can be either adaptive or maladaptive, significantly influencing an individual's psychological well-being. When maladaptive, they give rise to negative and limiting thought patterns, affecting how a person interprets and relates to their reality, which can contribute to the development of emotional and behavioral disorders.

Ellis and Grieger (1990) describe how what they refer to as *irrational beliefs*—beliefs characterized by absolutist demands toward oneself, others, and the world—generate dysfunctional emotional and behavioral responses in the individual. These beliefs, often inflexible and exaggerated, tend to distort the perception of reality, leading to disproportionate reactions and emotional distress. However, such irrational beliefs can be identified,

challenged, and transformed through psychotherapeutic intervention. In doing so, significant improvement in the individual's emotional and behavioral health can be achieved, promoting a more balanced and adaptive way of thinking that contributes to overall well-being and a more fulfilling life.

	CONCEPTUAL COMPARISON	
	Automatic thought or cognition	**Belief**
Example	A person is about to give a public presentation and suddenly thinks: ***"I'm going to forget everything I have to say, and everyone will think I'm stupid!"***	The same person, at a deeper and more unconscious level, believes: ***"For others to value and accept me, I must be perfect in everything I do."***
Characteristic	This is an *automatic thought* because it arises spontaneously in response to a specific situation—in this case, the anticipation of a presentation. It is not something the individual deliberately decides to think about; rather, it simply appears in their mind automatically. These thoughts are moment-specific, often involve cognitive distortions (e.g., catastrophizing), and can significantly influence how the person feels in that moment (e.g., anxious or nervous).	This is a *belief* because it represents a deeper and more generalized assumption or conviction about how things work in the person's life (in their "reality"), in this case, about what is required to gain acceptance and value from others. Beliefs are more stable and persistent than automatic thoughts and are often the result of past experiences or significant cultural teachings. They influence how individuals interpret and respond to various situations over time, not just in specific moments.

In conclusion, a *belief* is conceived as a deeply rooted personal conviction that an individual holds about themselves, others, and the surrounding world. These beliefs are fundamental to understanding how people interpret their experiences, process information, and respond emotionally and behaviorally to the various situations they encounter. Acting as filters or lenses through which reality is perceived, beliefs shape each person's thought structure, directly influencing their emotional well-being and behavior. Cognitive therapy, led by pioneers such as Aaron T. Beck and Albert Ellis, focuses precisely on identifying and transforming irrational or negative beliefs in order to alleviate psychological distress and facilitate positive change in the individual's life.

As Judith Beck (2006) points out, "...beliefs can be classified into two categories: intermediate beliefs (consisting of rules, attitudes, and assumptions) and core beliefs (rigid and absolute global ideas about oneself and/or others)" (p. 173). Intermediate beliefs act as

a bridge between automatic thoughts—instant responses to specific situations—and core beliefs, which are the deepest and most ingrained conceptions an individual holds about themselves and their environment. While intermediate beliefs include attitudes, personal rules, and assumptions that guide the interpretation of everyday experiences, core beliefs refer to fundamental perceptions about personal identity, self-worth, and safety in the world. The latter are more stable and less conscious, yet they have a significant impact on an individual's mental health and behavior.

3. Intermediate beliefs

As previously mentioned, *intermediate beliefs* play a crucial role by acting as a bridge between an individual's deeper core beliefs and the automatic thoughts that arise in response to specific situations. These intermediate beliefs often manifest in the form of personal rules, assumptions, and attitudes that a person adopts toward themselves, others, and the world in general. They function as implicit guidelines that influence how daily experiences are interpreted and managed, shaping both one's perception of reality and emotional and behavioral reactions to the challenges that life presents (Beck, 2006).

Therefore, this type of belief operates at a more conscious level than deeper (core) beliefs and tends to be more flexible. They include rules (e.g., *"If I don't succeed at everything, then I'm a failure"*), attitudes (e.g., *"It's terrible to make mistakes"*), and assumptions (e.g., *"If people really get to know me, they will reject me"*). These intermediate beliefs shape how daily experiences are interpreted and often also trigger automatic thoughts in specific situations.

This type of belief is particularly important in cognitive therapy because, although they are deeply rooted, they tend to be more accessible for review and change than core or deeper beliefs. By identifying and challenging these intermediate beliefs, therapists can help clients modify their way of thinking, which can lead to improvements in their emotions and behaviors. This process often involves questioning the validity of these beliefs and experimenting with new ways of thinking and acting that are more aligned with the individual's reality and personal goals (Beck et al., 2010).

Well then, in light of this, the obvious question would be: how are these intermediate beliefs specifically identified? According to Judith Beck (2006, p. 180), this is done by:

1. Identifying beliefs that appear as automatic thoughts.
2. Providing the first part of an assumption.
3. Asking directly about a rule or an attitude.
4. Using the *downward arrow* technique.
5. Analyzing the patient's automatic thoughts for common themes.
6. Reviewing a belief questionnaire completed by the patient.

As can be observed, a therapist approaches the identification of a person's intermediate beliefs through a careful and reflective process that begins by recognizing the beliefs manifested through *automatic thoughts*. This identification process is carried out by actively listening to the client, paying close attention to how they express their thoughts and emotions in everyday life. The therapist focuses on thoughts that arise spontaneously in response to specific situations, as these automatic thoughts often provide valuable clues about the individual's deeper, underlying beliefs. This approach enables the therapist to uncover the thought patterns that shape the client's experience, paving the way for deeper and more transformative therapeutic work (Beck, 2006).

In this case, the practitioner continues the process by providing the first part of an *assumption*. This involves presenting a partial statement or idea to the client, with the aim of eliciting a response that more clearly reveals their intermediate beliefs (Beck, 2006). This technique facilitates the exploration of unexamined assumptions the client may hold about themselves, others, or the world in general.

To deepen the identification of these beliefs, the therapist may directly ask about a *rule* or an *attitude* the client holds. This direct inquiry helps uncover the personal standards and attitudes that guide the individual's behavior, providing a clearer view of their intermediate beliefs (Beck, 2006).

On the other hand, the therapist may use the *downward arrow* technique, a highly effective method for deepening the understanding of the client's internal world. Through a series of successive questions, the therapist explores why a specific situation or thought is problematic for the individual. This approach allows for the gradual uncovering—layer by layer—of different levels of thought until reaching the most fundamental beliefs underlying the surface-level automatic thoughts (Beck, 2006). In this way, the process not only reveals the deep-seated convictions that sustain the client's emotional distress but also opens the door to transforming those beliefs into healthier and more adaptive ways of thinking.

A concrete example of the use of the downward arrow technique might be the following: A client expresses that they feel anxious because they have to give a presentation at work. The therapist begins by asking why that situation makes them feel anxious.

Client: "I feel anxious because I think I'll do poorly in the presentation."

Therapist: "What would it mean to you to do poorly in the presentation?"

Client: "If I do poorly, they'll think I'm not competent at my job."

Therapist: "And what would happen if they thought you weren't competent?"

Client: "If they think that, they might stop trusting me and won't give me important responsibilities anymore."

Therapist: "What would it mean to you if they didn't trust you or give you important responsibilities?"

Client: "It would mean that I'm not good enough as a professional."

In this fictional example, the therapist uses successive questions to delve deeper into the client's thoughts, moving from a surface-level fear about the presentation to a deeper core belief: *the fear of not being valuable enough as a professional*. This process reveals the underlying belief that sustains the anxiety, allowing the therapist and the client to work directly on that core belief to promote cognitive and emotional change.

Analyzing the client's automatic thoughts for common themes is crucial in this process. By identifying recurring patterns in the client's thoughts and reactions, the therapist can begin to outline the intermediate beliefs that consistently influence the individual's perception and behavior (Beck, 2006).

Finally, reviewing a belief questionnaire completed by the client provides an opportunity for both the therapist and the client to explicitly reflect on and discuss the identified beliefs. This step allows for a deeper exploration and validation of the intermediate beliefs, facilitating a shared understanding and forming the foundation for future therapeutic interventions (Beck, 2006).

Through these methods, the therapist carefully identifies an individual's intermediate beliefs, using an approach that combines active listening, direct inquiry, and precise techniques designed to uncover the client's underlying thought structure. This process not only sheds light on the beliefs that influence the individual's emotional and psychological well-being, but also lays the groundwork for deep cognitive and emotional change. By uncovering and challenging these beliefs, according to this psychotherapeutic approach, the client becomes open to new ways of interpreting their reality, facilitating the transformation toward healthier and more adaptive patterns of thinking and behavior.

4. Core beliefs

Core beliefs are considered the deepest and most fundamental assumptions a person holds about themselves, others, and the world around them. These beliefs are so deeply embedded in the individual's thought structure that they often operate unconsciously, subtly influencing how experiences are interpreted and how one responds emotionally and behaviorally to various situations. While these beliefs can be either positive or negative, cognitive therapy places particular emphasis on negative beliefs due to their significant impact on mental health and their capacity to perpetuate emotional distress. Identifying and modifying these beliefs is crucial for promoting lasting change in an individual's psychological well-being.

Beck et al. (2014) explain that core beliefs are fundamental ideas that people hold about themselves, others, and the world. These beliefs are deeply rooted in the individual's *cognitive structure* and typically develop during childhood based on early experiences. The author and his collaborators note that core beliefs can be classified into two categories:

1. Those associated with helplessness (e.g., "I am incompetent" or "I am helpless").

2. Those related to unlovability (e.g., "I am not worthy of being loved").

Core beliefs are not usually easily accessible to the client's awareness, but they are activated during moments of psychological distress. Throughout the therapeutic process,

the practitioner works to identify these beliefs by exploring automatic thoughts and using the downward arrow technique (Beck et al., 2014).

Judith Beck (2006) emphasizes that negative core beliefs often cluster around themes such as incompetence, unlovability, or vulnerability. These deeply rooted fundamental beliefs can give rise to a wide range of psychological problems, including anxiety disorders, depression, and personality disorders. By acting as distorted filters of reality, these beliefs influence how a person perceives and responds to everyday situations, limiting their ability to experience emotional well-being and to relate to their environment in a healthy way.

Cognitive therapy focuses on identifying, challenging, and transforming the negative core beliefs that underlie a person's emotional distress. Through techniques such as cognitive restructuring, the client learns to question these deeply ingrained beliefs and replace them with more realistic and adaptive ones. This process not only alleviates psychological symptoms but also facilitates deep and lasting changes in how the individual perceives themselves and relates to the world around them. As negative beliefs are replaced, the possibility emerges to live in a more balanced way, with a greater sense of well-being and connection with others.

In this regard, Judith Beck (2006) states:

> These types of beliefs develop during childhood, as the child interacts with significant people and is exposed to various situations. Most individuals tend to maintain primarily positive core beliefs throughout their lives (e.g., "I can handle situations," "I can carry out most things effectively," "I am a functional human being," "I can be likable," or "I am worthwhile"). Negative core beliefs generally emerge during times of psychological distress. (However, some patients with personality disorders tend to maintain their negative core beliefs in an almost constant state of activation.) Often, unlike automatic thoughts, the core beliefs that patients "know" to be true about themselves are not fully articulated until the therapist begins to uncover them by exploring the meaning behind the patient's thoughts, as is done through the use of the downward arrow technique, previously discussed (pp. 205-206).

As can be seen, identifying and modifying negative core beliefs is a challenging but essential process for achieving meaningful recovery in cognitive therapy. By addressing these deeply rooted beliefs, profound and lasting changes can be made in the individual's emotional and psychological well-being.

Beck states that, in order to identify and modify core beliefs, the therapist must carry out the following activities (Beck, 2006, pp. 207–208):

1. "Mentally formulate a hypothesis regarding which category of core belief ('helplessness' or 'unlovability') has given rise to specific automatic thoughts."

2. "Specify the core belief (internally) using the same techniques employed to identify intermediate beliefs."

3. "Explain to the patient your hypotheses about the core belief(s) and ask them to confirm or refute them. As the patient provides additional information about current and childhood situations and their reactions to them, refine your hypotheses."

4. "Educate the patient about core beliefs in general and about their specific core belief. Guide them in monitoring how the core belief operates in the present."

5. "Begin evaluating and modifying the core belief; help the patient specify a new, more adaptive core belief; examine the childhood origin of the core belief, its persistence over the years, and its contribution to current difficulties; continue monitoring the activation of the core belief in the present; use 'rational' methods to reduce the strength of the old core belief and increase that of the new one, and apply experiential or 'emotional' techniques when the patient no longer rationally or intellectually believes in a core belief but is still emotionally attached to it."

In this logic, then, the process begins with the therapist formulating a *hypothesis* about the nature of the core belief underlying the client's or patient's automatic thoughts—whether it is a belief related to "helplessness" or to the feeling of "being unlovable". Based on this initial hypothesis, the therapist applies an approach similar to the one used to identify intermediate beliefs, delving deeper into the analysis to more clearly specify the core belief (Beck, 2006). This careful process of inquiry allows for the uncovering of the client's most deeply held convictions that guide their emotions and behaviors, laying the foundation for more focused and transformative therapeutic work.

Next, the therapist shares their hypotheses with the client, inviting them to confirm or refute them, which allows for a deeper exploration of these hypotheses through discussion of the client's past and present experiences and their reactions to them (Beck, 2006). This step is crucial for understanding how core beliefs influence the client's life and how they manifest in the present.

The fourth step involves educating the client about core beliefs in general and about their specific core belief, guiding them to recognize how this belief influences their daily life. This self-monitoring is fundamental to the change process (Beck, 2006).

Finally, the process culminates with the evaluation and modification of the core belief. The therapist assists the client in formulating a new, more adaptive core belief, analyzing its origin, its persistence over time, and its impact on the client's current difficulties. Rational or functional methods are used to weaken the old core belief and strengthen the new one, and experiential or emotional techniques are applied in cases where the client, although no longer rationally believes in the old belief, remains emotionally attached to it (Beck, 2006).

This comprehensive approach goes beyond merely recognizing and understanding core beliefs; it fosters a deep and lasting transformation in the client. By working on these fundamental beliefs, the client gains the ability to adopt a healthier and more adaptive perspective—both toward themselves and their environment. This process not only alleviates

emotional distress but also promotes an internal shift that supports greater well-being and a more balanced way of relating to the world around them.

The following table presents examples of: a) an *automatic thought*, b) an *intermediate belief* associated with it, and finally, c) the *core belief* that is fueling the entire dysfunctional belief system of the individual:

	Automatic Thought	**Intermediate Belief**	**Core Belief**
Example	***"I'm going to make a mistake at work and everyone will notice."***	***"If I make a mistake, it means I'm not competent at my job."***	***"I am always inadequate!"***
Analysis	This is an automatic thought that may arise just before completing or presenting an important task. It is directly linked to the specific situation and reflects an immediate concern about one's performance and how it will be perceived by others. This type of thought typically emerges spontaneously, encapsulating fears and expectations regarding the outcome, and can influence both the emotional experience and the behavioral response of the person in that critical moment.	The intermediate belief, in this case, establishes a connection between the possibility of making a mistake (a specific event) and a broader interpretation of what that mistake would imply regarding the individual's competence. This intermediate belief functions as a bridge linking the automatic thought, which is situation-specific, to the deeper and more generalized core belief the individual holds about themselves. In this way, the intermediate belief not only influences how the mistake is perceived but also reinforces deeply rooted convictions about one's own worth and capability.	The core belief is a deeply rooted conviction a person holds about themselves. In this case, the belief of feeling inadequate not only underlies the concern about making mistakes in the workplace but also colors the way the individual interprets a wide range of situations throughout their life. This core belief significantly influences self-esteem, motivation, and emotions, affecting various contexts beyond the professional environment. Because it is so deeply embedded in personal perception, this belief impacts how the person faces everyday challenges, perpetuating a cycle of thoughts and emotions that continuously reinforce the sense of inadequacy.

Cognitive-behavioral therapeutic models (CBT)

Cognitive-behavioral therapies (CBT) are based on the idea that individuals do not react solely to events themselves, but rather to the way they interpret and assign meaning to those events. From this perspective, thoughts become the lens through which the world is perceived—and this lens is not always clear. As previously discussed, according to classical cognitive theory, individuals often, without realizing it, distort their thoughts, creating an altered version of reality. These cognitive distortions—such as irrational beliefs or mistaken ideas about themselves, others, and the environment—can profoundly influence how they feel and behave. Thus, what begins as an imprecise thought can lead to intensely negative emotions and, ultimately, to behaviors that perpetuate distress (Ruiz, Díaz & Villalobos, 2012).

These CBT models integrate both cognitive and behavioral techniques and strategies to help individuals change negative or unhelpful thinking patterns and develop skills to more effectively manage difficult or stressful situations.

Some of the strategies used include (Ruiz, Díaz y Villalobos, 2012):

1. *Cognitive restructuring:* Helps clients identify, challenge, and change distorted or irrational thoughts, replacing them with more realistic and balanced ones.

2. *Problem-solving training:* Teaches clients to handle life's challenges more effectively by developing problem-solving skills.

3. *Systematic desensitization and exposure:* Techniques used to treat phobias and anxiety through gradual exposure to the feared situation in a controlled setting, helping the client overcome their fear.

4. *Relaxation techniques:* Such as deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, to help reduce tension and stress.

5. *Social and communication skills training:* Aimed at improving social interactions and the ability to communicate effectively.

According to Caballo (2007), CBT is highly effective for a wide range of psychological disorders, including the following:

- **Anxiety disorders:** Detailed treatments exist for specific phobias, social phobia, agoraphobia, panic disorder, obsessions, post-traumatic stress disorder, and generalized anxiety. Treatment methods such as exposure-based approaches, cognitive and coping techniques, and other behavioral strategies are among the main methods implemented for these conditions.

- **Sexual disorders:** Sexual dysfunctions and paraphilias are addressed using specific treatment techniques, along with particular strategies for managing cases of sexual offending.

- **Impulse control disorders:** This group includes pathological gambling and trichotillomania, among others. The therapeutic approach focuses on coping techniques and exposure to modify problematic behaviors.

- **Mood disorders:** Unipolar depression and bipolar disorders are addressed from both behavioral and cognitive perspectives, offering programs that include increasing pleasurable activities, social skills training, and cognitive restructuring.

- **Psychotic and organic disorders:** Finally, there are also specialized techniques for treating individuals with schizophrenia, along with psychoeducational interventions and behavioral management of issues related to dementia.

CBTs are characterized by being goal-oriented, present-centered, and time-limited therapies. The effectiveness of these psychotherapies is widely supported by scientific research, making them one of the most effective and recommended therapeutic approaches for the treatment of psychological disorders (Caballo, 2007).

In addition to the renowned pioneers of cognitive therapy, such as Beck, Ellis, and Meichenbaum, there are other theorists who have left a profound mark on the evolution of this approach, providing it with greater depth and specialization. These researchers, through dedication and vision, have not only expanded the framework of CBT but have also developed unique therapeutic models designed to treat various psychological disorders and tailored to the needs of different individuals and contexts. Each of them has contributed a fundamental piece to the construction of a more refined and enriched approach, allowing CBT to continuously expand and evolve. Among these authors are:

1. **Marsha M. Linehan:** With a deep understanding of the emotional complexity of individuals, this theorist developed *Dialectical Behavior Therapy* (DBT), an innovative approach within the CBT framework. Her creation was driven by the need to specifically address the challenges faced by those living with borderline personality disorder and difficulties related to emotional regulation. By combining the principles of cognitive and behavioral therapy, she introduced a new dimension by integrating acceptance strategies and mindfulness techniques (Linehan, 1993). Her approach not only brought relief to many but also transformed the landscape of mental health, guiding individuals toward deeper emotional balance.

2. **Steven C. Hayes:** This theorist, along with his collaborators, driven by a profoundly humanistic vision of psychology, founded *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy* (ACT), an approach that invites individuals to embrace their experiences with acceptance and commit to meaningful life changes. Through the integration of strategies such as mindfulness and behavior change, Hayes created a method to help individuals develop greater psychological flexibility, enabling them to face challenges with greater clarity and strength. Although ACT differs in some respects from traditional CBT, its essence remains connected to the cognitive-behavioral foundation, forming part of the so-called *third wave* of behavioral therapies (Hayes et al., 2003).

3. **John D. Teasdale:** Together with his colleagues Mark Williams and Zindel Segal, Teasdale set out to create an approach that would help individuals break the recurrent cycle of depression. From this effort emerged *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy* (MBCT). This innovative approach combines mindfulness practices with the principles of cognitive therapy, offering those who have experienced major depression a powerful tool for preventing relapse. With a compassionate vision and deep respect for human experience, Teasdale and his team fused mindful awareness and cognitive restructuring, offering a more sustainable path toward emotional healing (Segal et al., 2008).

4. **Jeffrey E. Young:** Lastly, this theorist developed *Schema Therapy*, which expands traditional CBT by focusing on broader and more persistent patterns of thought and behavior known as schemas. This type of therapy has proven particularly effective in treating personality disorders and other complex issues that have not responded to standard CBT (Young et al., 2003).

These authors and their work represent the ongoing evolution of CBT, demonstrating its adaptability and applicability to a wide range of psychological problems. Through their innovations, they have made significant contributions to the field of psychotherapy, offering new perspectives and tools for the treatment of mental disorders.

Mindfulness and CBT

General aspects of Mindfulness

Mindfulness, or full attention, is more than just a practice; it is a philosophical invitation to "be present" in everyday life—to live the moment with intention and without judgment. Although its deep roots come from Buddhist traditions, where mindfulness meditation is part of a spiritual path toward enlightenment and the alleviation of suffering, this practice has found a significant place in the modern world. In recent decades, mindfulness has been embraced and adapted by Western psychology and medicine, not merely as a technique, but as a powerful tool for transforming individuals' relationship with their mental and physical health.

The rise of mindfulness in the Western world has a face: Jon Kabat-Zinn, an American professor emeritus of medicine whose vision transformed the way this ancient discipline is understood and practiced. In 1979, Kabat-Zinn founded the *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction* (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts, bringing mindfulness from Eastern spiritual traditions into the clinical setting. For Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness is the awareness that arises by paying attention intentionally, in the present moment, and without judgment—allowing things to be as they are. His approach has been revolutionary, opening the doors of mindfulness meditation to therapeutic and clinical contexts (Didonna, 2016). Through his program, thousands of people have found relief from stress, anxiety, depression, and even chronic pain, demonstrating that mindful awareness not only calms the mind but can transform lives.

Over the years, research has increasingly revealed the transformative power of mindfulness in people's lives, particularly in its ability to alleviate stress, anxiety, and depression. A clear example of this is the meta-analysis conducted by Grossman and colleagues in 2004, which found that the practice of mindfulness is not only linked to tangible improvements in mental health but also brings about profound benefits in quality of life. These researchers discovered that individuals who adopt this practice experience a notable shift in how they manage stress, while also strengthening their attention, improving emotional regulation, and developing greater self-awareness (Grossman et al., 2004). Far from being just another technique, mindfulness has become a powerful tool that helps individuals reconnect with their own well-being, enabling them to face life's challenges with greater clarity and serenity.

CBT with integrated Mindfulness

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy with Integrated Mindfulness (MiCBT), as presented by Bruno Cayoun in his work *Terapia cognitivo-conductual con Mindfulness integrado* (2014) [Mindfulness-integrated CBT: Principles and practice], represents an innovative approach that combines the fundamental principles of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) with the practice of mindfulness meditation. This model is structured as a four-phase therapeutic process that enables clients to develop skills for both emotional regulation and the management of their thoughts, helping them to confront and resolve a wide range of psychological disorders.

MiCBT is based on the premise that mindfulness—understood as a deliberate way of paying attention to the present moment without judgment—is essential for internalizing attention and regulating emotions before addressing external challenges. In its initial stage, known as the *"personal phase,"* the client learns to focus on their internal experience, promoting the acceptance and regulation of thoughts and emotions. This phase primarily aims to develop greater awareness of both body and mind, thereby strengthening self-regulation skills (Cayoun, 2014).

In the second phase, known as the *"exposure phase,"* the focus shifts toward the application of exposure techniques to reduce avoidance. This process involves both visualizations and real-life confrontations with stressful situations, enabling the client to decrease emotional reactivity and gain greater self-confidence. The goal of this phase is for the client to acquire tools to face their fears in a more objective and calm manner (Cayoun, 2014).

The third phase of MiCBT, known as the *"interpersonal phase,"* expands the therapeutic focus to include relationships with others. At this stage, clients practice interpersonal skills grounded in the principles of mindfulness, allowing them to shift their attention away from the "self" and gain a better understanding of communication dynamics with others. This phase is essential for addressing interpersonal issues that perpetuate psychological distress and for preventing future relapses (Cayoun, 2014).

Finally, the *"empathy phase"* teaches clients to cultivate skills of empathy and compassion toward themselves and others. This phase aims to develop an ethical awareness that promotes compassion as a counter-conditioning method for negative behavioral patterns. In doing so, individuals learn to connect more fully with their own emotions and with those of the people around them, contributing to more sustained emotional well-being over time (Cayoun, 2014).

Taken as a whole, MiCBT is a systemic therapeutic approach that stands out for its ability to integrate mindfulness practices with traditional cognitive and behavioral methods. By focusing on both internal experience and external interactions, MiCBT enables clients not only to regulate their emotions and attention, but also to engage in a structured approach for confronting and overcoming psychological distress (Cayoun, 2014).

Reinforcement Co-emergence Model

Cayoun (2014) also outlines the role and phenomenology of the four functional components of the *Reinforcement Co-emergence Model*, developed by psychologist Steven C. Hayes as part of his work in *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy* (ACT). This model is based on *Relational Frame Theory* (RFT), a behavioral theory of language and cognition. RFT holds that complex human behavior, such as thinking and language, develops from learned relationships between stimuli. The Reinforcement Co-emergence Model proposes that the relationships between stimuli and reinforcers are not linear or simple, but rather co-emerge—that is, they occur simultaneously within a continuous process (Hayes et al., 2003).

The four functional components of the *Reinforcement Co-emergence Model*, according to Cayoun, are as follows:

- **Sensory perception:** The model suggests that, in addition to the five traditional senses, there are two additional senses fundamental to human experience: *metacognitive introspection* and *interoception*. Metacognitive introspection allows individuals to become aware of their own thoughts, while interoception provides the ability to perceive the physical sensations experienced in the body. Both senses, according to Cayoun, are developed and refined through practices such as mindfulness meditation, helping individuals connect more deeply with their inner world and gain a better understanding of their own mind and body (Cayoun, 2014).

- **Evaluation:** The model establishes a clear distinction between two fundamental types of cognitive processing. On one hand, there is *descriptive* and *objective* processing, which allows for the neutral recognition and classification of stimuli. On the other hand, there is evaluative and critical processing, which leads to judgments about stimuli based on past experiences, values, emotions, and needs. This evaluative processing may be conscious or automatic, and is often grounded in schemas or beliefs acquired over time. In this way, each stimulus is not only identified but also interpreted through the filter of personal experiences (Cayoun, 2014).

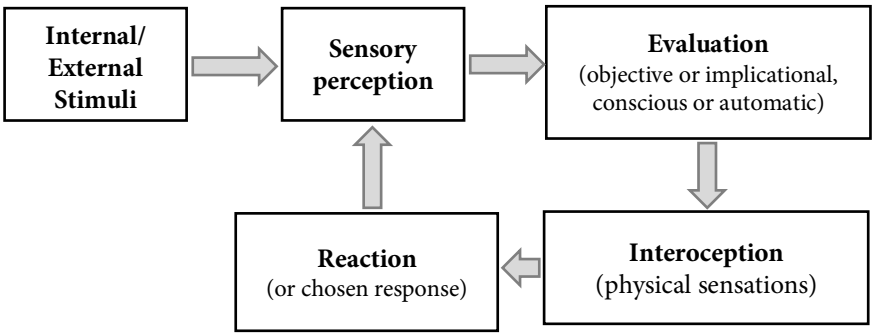
- **Interoception:** The model proposes that physical sensations are constantly present in the body, except in areas without neurons. The intensity with which these sensations are perceived, as well as the awareness of them, varies depending on the emotional load and stress levels experienced by the individual. These sensations are expressed along a hedonic continuum, ranging from pleasant to unpleasant, with neutral sensations in between. Additionally, four basic perceptual character-

istics are recognized in these sensations: mass, temperature, movement, and cohesion. Interoception, understood as the capacity to perceive these internal sensations, is an essential component in mindfulness practice and is closely linked to neuroplasticity, highlighting its importance in the brain's processes of change and adaptation (Cayoun, 2014).

- **Reaction:** Finally, the model explains that most physical sensations trigger immediate responses, which may be overt or covert, and occur across mental, verbal, or physical dimensions. The nature and intensity of these reactions depend on both the strength of the sensations and the prior associations the individual has developed over time. Responses tend to move toward craving, when there is an attempt to intensify a pleasant sensation, or toward aversion, when there is an effort to avoid or reduce an unpleasant sensation. This cycle of reactions can feed back into the system, generating more activation in the neural networks involved, which in turn reinforces those same response patterns, contributing to the maintenance or amplification of the sensations (Cayoun, 2014).

The author proposes that this approach allows for a deeper understanding of the foundations of learning through what he calls the *neurophenomenology of reinforcement*—that is, the direct and lived experience of cognitive-behavioral mechanisms in each individual. This approach invites a view of mind and matter not as separate entities, but as processes that co-emerge, constructing the reality of human experience (Cayoun, 2014). His model harmoniously integrates contemporary learning theory with the phenomenology inherent in meditation and the core principles of mindfulness, thus offering a unified and comprehensive perspective on how human beings learn and transform their behavior through these practices.

The following is a diagram of the interaction among the functional components of the *Reinforcement Co-emergence Model*, according to the author (Cayoun, 2014, p. 31):



In conclusion, this approach offers an integrative and deeply human perspective on how individuals can transform their lives by combining mindfulness practice with cognitive-behavioral principles. By understanding mind and matter as processes that co-emerge, the model emphasizes the importance of direct and conscious experience in the restructuring of thought and behavior patterns. It not only enriches the understanding of the learning process but also enables individuals to develop greater self-awareness, more balanced control over their emotions and actions, and deeper compassion toward themselves and others in their daily lives.

Post-rationalist cognitive model

The post-rationalist cognitive model represents a revolutionary approach within contemporary psychotherapy—particularly in cognitive-behavioral therapy—developed primarily by the Italian neuropsychiatrist Vittorio Guidano during the 1980s. This model emerged as a critical response to the limitations of traditional cognitivism by incorporating constructivist and systemic elements that integrate the emotional, developmental, and narrative dimensions of the individual. Rather than focusing exclusively on the modification of dysfunctional thoughts, as classical cognitive therapy does, the post-rationalist approach proposes that the human mind is a constantly evolving process, whose organization is deeply influenced by the individual's personal history and emotional experiences (Guidano, 1994).

It is important to note that, according to Guidano himself, his post-rationalist model is not an antithesis to classical rationalism, but rather an expansion that integrates emotional, perceptual, sensory, and behavioral aspects into the construction of knowledge. It acknowledges that logical reasoning is only one part of human experience, and that other forms of knowledge—particularly those linked to emotion and intersubjectivity—play a crucial role in the continuity of human life (Guidano, 2018).

Epistemological foundations

The post-rationalist model is grounded in a constructivist epistemology, in which—as previously discussed—the human being is not conceived as a passive receiver of information, but as an active constructor of their own reality. This approach is also influenced by complex systems theory and the biology of cognition proposed by authors such as Maturana and Varela (2003). From this perspective, knowledge is not an objective representation of the external world, but a subjective, self-referential construction that is dependent on the observer.

In this way, the post-rationalist model rejects the Cartesian dualism between mind and body and adopts a more integrative and process-oriented view. Guidano (1994) proposes that the human mind is a self-organizing system that evolves continuously, influenced by the interaction between emotions, beliefs, and subjective experience. This evolution does not follow a linear pattern but is marked by moments of reorganization, crisis, and transformation, which are fundamental to the development of personal identity (León & Tamayo, 2011).

Fundamental elements of the approach

The organization of the "self"

One of the central aspects of the post-rationalist model is its focus on the concept of the *self* or personal identity. Guidano (1994) argues that the "self" is not a static entity, but a dynamic process organized over time. This organization depends on emotional and affective experiences, particularly those lived during childhood and within the context of attachment relationships (Bowlby, 2009).

The "self" is organized around a set of beliefs and narratives that give meaning to individual experience. These narrative schemas, which begin to form from early affective bonds, function as interpretive frameworks through which the individual constructs their sense of identity. In this context, post-rationalist therapy aims to help the client identify and reorganize their personal narratives in order to achieve greater internal coherence and a healthier integration of their experiences.

As previously stated, it is evident that emotions play a central role in the post-rationalist cognitive model, as they are viewed as primary organizers of experience. Guidano emphasizes the importance of early affective bonds in the development of personal identity. The first attachment relationships establish emotional patterns that influence how individuals perceive the world and see themselves. This results in what the author refers to as "Personal Meaning Organizations" (PMOs), which are patterns of self-organization based on early emotional experiences and the quality of affective bonds (León & Tamayo, 2011).

Narrative and emotion

Narrative holds a central place in post-rationalist theory. According to Guidano (1994), individuals structure their experience in the form of stories that allow them to make sense of their lives and emotions. These narratives not only organize autobiographical memory but also determine how people perceive and respond to their present emotional experiences.

From this theoretical perspective, *emotions* are not seen as automatic reactions to external stimuli, but rather as complex experiences that are deeply influenced by the narratives the individual has constructed throughout their life. Emotions are therefore considered forms of knowledge, as they enable the individual to relate to their environment and adjust their adaptive responses in accordance with their personal history and their organization of the "self" (Balbi, 2004).

This approach represents a crucial difference from traditional cognitive therapy, which tends to treat emotions as phenomena derived from irrational or distorted thoughts. In the post-rationalist model, emotions are an essential part of the construction of the sense of "self" and are fundamental to the narrative reorganization pursued in therapy.

Post-rationalist cognitive therapy

In this same vein, "therapy" from the post-rationalist cognitive approach fundamentally differs from other forms of cognitive psychotherapy, primarily due to its focus on the reorganization of the client's subjective and narrative experience. While traditional cognitive therapies concentrate on identifying and correcting "irrational beliefs" or "cognitive distortions," the post-rationalist approach is oriented toward transforming the way individuals organize and understand their emotions, thoughts, and experiences. This transformation is viewed not merely as a cognitive change, but as a profound restructuring of the *self* and the personal narratives that guide the individual's life (Guidano, 1994).

Post-rationalist therapy, consequently, is a client-centered process in which the therapist assumes the role of a guide who helps the individual become an observer of themselves. This therapeutic process aims to activate the person's own mechanisms (personal resources), through which they can achieve greater awareness of their own emotional and narrative functioning.

The following is a detailed analysis of the key components of the therapeutic process from this theoretical perspective:

a. Self-observation and reflexivity

One of the pillars of the post-rationalist approach is *self-observation*, a therapeutic technique that invites the client to examine their own "patterns of thought" and "emotion" from an external and reflective perspective. This process aims to help the individual develop the ability to observe themselves in action, identifying how certain emotions, beliefs, and behaviors are interconnected. Guidano (1994) describes self-observation as an essential tool for change, as it allows the client to gain distance from their most distressing emotions and begin to recognize them as part of a broader and organized system.

Reflexivity refers to the individual's capacity to reflect on their own mental and emotional functioning. Through self-observation, the client can begin to identify the narratives they have constructed about themselves and their life, and how these narratives influence their perception of the world and their relationships. Reflexivity, in this sense, is a process that enables the client to break free from the emotional and cognitive automatisms that have shaped their subjective experience and to develop a new awareness of themselves (Balbi, 2004).

Self-observation is not an end in itself, but a means for the client to reorganize their internal experience. As the individual observes their emotions and beliefs in action, they may begin to notice inconsistencies or conflicts within their personal narrative. These inconsistencies become key points for therapeutic intervention, as they allow the client to actively work on reorganizing their emotional and narrative experience. This process is highly individualized, and the therapist must accompany the client with sensitivity, respecting their pace and helping them integrate new perceptions and meanings.

b. Narrative reorganization

Narrative reorganization is a central process in post-rationalist therapy. From this perspective, personal narratives are not merely stories that individuals tell about their lives; they are deep structures that organize subjective and emotional experience. These narratives allow the individual to make sense of their life, providing coherence and continuity to past, present, and future experiences (Guidano, 1994).

In many cases, clients come to therapy with narratives that have become rigid, dysfunctional, or incoherent (Balbi, 2004). For example, a person with depression may have constructed a personal narrative centered on worthlessness or failure, which affects their ability to interpret new experiences in a positive light. Similarly, a person with anxiety may have developed a narrative of constant vulnerability and danger, which amplifies their fears and minimizes their capabilities.

Narrative reorganization in post-rationalist therapy therefore involves helping the client identify these dysfunctional narratives and restructure them in a more flexible, coherent, and adaptive way. This process is not simply about changing "irrational beliefs" or "negative thoughts," but rather about a deep transformation in how the individual organizes their identity and experience. Narratives not only give meaning to events but also shape how the person experiences and responds to their emotions (Balbi, 2004).

During therapy, the client is guided to explore and reflect on the stories they have told about themselves and how these have influenced their life. The therapist facilitates this process through questions and explorations that lead the individual to confront the contradictory or maladaptive aspects of their narrative. As the client becomes aware of these contradictions, the possibility opens up to reorganize their life story in a more coherent and constructive way.

c. The emotional relationship in therapy

The post-rationalist model also places strong emphasis on the *emotional dimension* of the therapeutic process. While in traditional cognitive therapy emotions are often treated as secondary responses to beliefs or thoughts, in the post-rationalist approach emotions are seen as a central component of human experience, deeply connected to the narrative construction of the "self" (Guidano, 1994).

In this therapeutic approach, disturbing emotions such as fear, sadness, or anger are not simply automatic reactions, but are linked to the personal narrative and the meaning the individual assigns to them. In many cases, clients seek therapy because they are trapped in a cycle of distressing emotions they are unable to adequately process. From this perspective, these emotions are not resolved merely by changing beliefs; rather, they require deep elaboration that allows the individual to reorganize them within their personal narrative (Balbi, 2004).

In post-rationalist therapy, the therapist helps the client explore their most distressing emotions—not to eliminate them, but to reorganize them and assign them new meaning. This process involves the client learning to identify and express their emotions in a healthier way, integrating them into their personal narrative in a coherent manner. The therapist, in turn, creates a safe space where the client can experience and process their emotions without judgment, thus facilitating the process of emotional reorganization.

d. The role of the therapist

In the post-rationalist approach, the therapist is not an instructor who corrects or teaches the client how to think correctly. Instead, the therapist acts as a guide who facilitates self-exploration and self-knowledge. Guidano (1994) describes the therapist as a "strategic disruptor," someone who does not impose change but creates the necessary conditions for the client to begin questioning and reorganizing their own experience.

This role is fundamental to respecting the client's autonomy in the therapeutic process. In this case, the practitioner does not direct the content of the client's narrative but instead creates the conditions for the individual to review and restructure their personal story autonomously. The therapeutic relationship is, in itself, a space of *co-construction*, where the client and the therapist collaborate to generate new ways of understanding and organizing subjective experience.

Post-rationalist therapy, therefore, represents a deep and multidimensional therapeutic approach that focuses on the reorganization of the client's subjective and narrative experience. Through techniques such as self-observation and narrative reorganization, the client is guided toward greater reflexivity and a more coherent integration of their emotions and experiences. This approach recognizes the centrality of emotions and affective relationships in the construction of the "self" and provides a flexible and respectful therapeutic framework that enables the client to reorganize their identity in a more adaptive and coherent manner.

The "Moviola" technique

The *Moviola* technique is a central tool in post-rationalist psychotherapy that facilitates the reworking of the client's autobiographical narratives. It is based on the metaphor of a "Moviola", a device used in film editing that allows scenes to be viewed in slow motion, fast-forwarded, or rewound. In therapy, this analogy is used to help the client "review" past emotional experiences in a detailed and reflective manner, breaking down life events into small scenes that can be carefully analyzed (Lambruschi & Lenzi, 2008).

Therapeutic process and application

The "Moviola" technique focuses on the reconstruction of meaningful experiences, allowing the client to explore both their immediate experience and the conscious self-image they have constructed over time. This method is particularly effective in helping the individual distinguish between "how" they experience emotions and "why" they believe those emotions occur, thus leading to a deeper and less distorted understanding of their emotional reactions and internal narratives (Guidano, 1994).

In the words of Guidano (1994) himself:

> In the "Moviola," the focus of attention increasingly turns toward the new discrepancy between immediate experience and its explicit reordering,

> with the agreed-upon goal of reconstructing the coherence pattern on which it depends.
>
> It thus becomes possible, on the one hand, to further intensify the focus on distressing feelings by reconstructing their various connections to other aspects of immediate experience and helping the client progressively understand how every emotional state—not only being multifaceted and including the experience of opposing feelings—is always a construction that involves processes of recognition and self-reference. On the other hand, through the reconstruction of how the client develops beliefs and expectations from their ongoing immediate experience, the limits of their current self-image and the self-deceptive patterns used to maintain it begin to emerge. This marks the remaining work of this first stage, which essentially consists of reconstructing the client's current coherence pattern and the ways in which its imbalance has triggered the original problems (p. 176).

Breakdown of the "Moviola" method

The following is a summary of the steps involved in this therapeutic technique, as outlined by Lambruschi and Lenzi (2008):

1. **Concreteness and specificity:** One of the first steps is to break down general problems or emotions into specific experiences and concrete episodes. This means that instead of speaking abstractly (e.g., "I always feel anxious"), the therapist guides the client to describe particular episodes in which that anxiety occurred. This concreteness enables the client to gain a clearer and more detailed view of the circumstances surrounding their emotions, thus facilitating the process of self-exploration (Lambruschi & Lenzi, 2008).

2. **Episodic review in the present tense:** A key characteristic of the "Moviola" technique is that it is conducted in the present tense, as if the client were reliving the situation in real time. The therapist asks the client to describe not only what happened, but also how they felt physically, what they thought, and what emotions arose at each moment. This form of present-tense narration helps maintain the emotional intensity of the experience and allows for the identification of significant details that may have been ignored or repressed (Lambruschi & Lenzi, 2008).

3. **Sequencing and slowing down:** In post-rationalist therapy, the episode is broken down into small scenes, each explored in detail, almost as if editing a film. This process of slowing down allows the client to carefully observe how each small interaction or stimulus triggers an emotional reaction. The ability to "slow down" the experience and examine it thoroughly helps uncover repetitive patterns that

may not have been previously evident (Lambruschi & Lenzi, 2008).

4. **"Zooming in" and "zooming Out":** During the review, the therapist helps the client "zoom in" on specific aspects of the experience to examine fine details, and then "zoom out" to see how those details fit into the broader narrative of the experience. This back-and-forth process enriches the understanding of the event and shows how small elements can significantly impact how the client perceives the overall situation (Lambruschi & Lenzi, 2008).

5. **Internal and external points of view:** A distinctive aspect of the "Moviola" technique is the opportunity for the client to explore the experience from two different perspectives: the internal (how they felt at the time) and the external (how it might appear from an observer's perspective). This alternation helps the client step back from their immediate emotions and provides a broader, more objective view of their behavior and reactions. The technique thus enables the client to "see" how their actions affect relationships and how these interactions are interpreted from different angles (Lambruschi & Lenzi, 2008).

Therapeutic benefits of the "Moviola" technique

The "Moviola" technique offers several key benefits in the therapeutic context:

- **Deautomatization of experience:** By slowing down and examining experiences in detail, the technique disrupts the automatic nature that often characterizes emotional responses, allowing the client to gain greater awareness and reflection on their own behavioral patterns (Lambruschi & Lenzi, 2008).

- **Narrative reorganization:** It enables the client to restructure their internal narratives by integrating experiences that were previously seen as incoherent or distressing. Through in-depth exploration, these experiences can be incorporated into a more coherent and comprehensive narrative (Lambruschi & Lenzi, 2008).

- **Increased cognitive flexibility:** The ability to view experiences from multiple perspectives helps the client develop greater cognitive flexibility, allowing for new interpretations and responses to future events (Lambruschi & Lenzi, 2008).

Clinical applications of the post-rationalist cognitive approach

The post-rationalist cognitive model has proven particularly useful in the treatment of affective disorders, such as depression and anxiety, as well as personality disorders. As previously discussed, the post-rationalist approach places special emphasis on the internal organization of the "self" and on how individuals construct and structure their per-

sonal narratives over time. According to Guidano (1994), these disorders can be understood as the result of a disorganization of the "self", in which emotional experiences and internal narratives fail to integrate coherently, leading to dysfunctional behavioral patterns and persistent emotional distress.

In *depression*, for example, clients often develop narratives centered around feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness, constructed from early experiences of rejection or loss. These narratives are reinforced over time, creating a cycle that perpetuates the depressive state. Post-rationalist therapy works to identify these personal stories of failure or self-devaluation and reorganize them, helping the individual construct a more positive and resilient narrative (Guidano, 1994). This process involves exploring emotional experiences in depth, allowing the person to observe and question the interpretations they have made of their own story, thus facilitating a reconstruction of identity that is no longer anchored in a pessimistic view of the self.

In *anxiety disorders*, the post-rationalist approach addresses narratives centered on vulnerability and constant danger. Individuals with anxiety tend to anticipate threats and feel that they lack the necessary resources to cope with stressful situations. These perceptions are organized into narratives of insecurity and fear, which ultimately limit their ability to face everyday challenges. Therapy helps clients dismantle these narratives of vulnerability by providing a space to explore their emotions and understand how these stories have been constructed and reinforced over time. In doing so, it promotes a redefinition of their self-image, allowing them to develop greater confidence in their personal strengths and coping abilities.

Likewise, in personality disorders—such as *borderline personality disorder* (BPD)—the post-rationalist model offers a valuable tool for understanding the intense emotional fluctuations and chaotic interpersonal relationships that characterize these clinical presentations. According to Guidano, individuals with personality disorders often possess fragmented narratives, in which extreme emotional experiences are not coherently integrated into their identity. Through post-rationalist therapy, the aim is to reorganize these fragmented experiences, helping the client develop a more stable and coherent narrative that allows for the constructive integration of emotions, thereby facilitating healthier relationships and greater emotional stability (Guidano, 1994).

Ultimately, this style of psychotherapy not only identifies and modifies dysfunctional narratives but also promotes a deep reorganization of the sense of "self," allowing the client to restructure their life experiences in a more flexible and adaptive way. This narrative reorganization leads to improvements in self-image, self-acceptance, and a greater capacity to manage emotions, resulting in more lasting emotional well-being.

In conclusion, the post-rationalist cognitive approach offers an innovative and complex view of the human mind, integrating emotional, narrative, and developmental aspects into the understanding of the "self" and psychological disorders. Through techniques such as self-observation and narrative reorganization, post-rationalist therapy seeks to generate a profound change in the client's personal identity, facilitating greater internal coherence and better adaptation to emotional experiences. This approach has proven to be a valuable tool in clinical practice, particularly in the treatment of affective and personality disorders.

The narrative approach

In the fields of Psychology and Social Work, the narrative approach offers a profound and human-centered perspective: people do not merely live their experiences—they organize them into stories that give shape and meaning to their existence. According to this perspective, the stories individuals tell—both to themselves and to others—are not just simple accounts, but key elements that shape their identity, their worldview, and the way they understand the most meaningful moments of their lives. In telling these stories, people organize their experiences, emotions, and thoughts, creating a narrative thread that provides coherence and helps them find meaning in the course of their everyday lives.

Bruner's pioneering narrative approach

In this context, the theoretical narrative approach of American psychologist and educator Jerome Bruner represents a crucial milestone in contemporary psychology. His work, which emphasizes the power of narratives to give meaning to human experience, has radically transformed the understanding of human development and its interaction with culture. Bruner conceives of narratives as much more than a simple organization of events; they are the mechanisms through which individuals construct, negotiate, and reinterpret reality. In this sense, the author positions himself as a pioneer of narrative psychology, presenting an approach that challenges traditional scientific models focused exclusively on information processing and cognitive mechanisms.

In his work *Actos de significado* (1991) [Acts of meaning], Bruner begins his exploration with a critique of the fragmentation of psychology and the limitations of the so-called "cognitive revolution." Although the cognitive revolution brought the study of the mind back into focus, Bruner argues that it soon shifted toward a purely computational approach, neglecting the study of meaning. For the author, the essence of human thought lies in the process of making sense of experience, and it is precisely this aspect—the construction and negotiation of meaning through narratives—that should be at the heart of psychological inquiry. According to Bruner, meaning is the key to understanding human actions, and psychology should focus on how individuals construct their reality based on the meanings they assign to their experiences (Bruner, 1991).

Bruner develops the concept of "cultural psychology," asserting that the process of meaning-making always takes place within a specific cultural context. Culture provides the symbolic tools that enable individuals to shape their experiences and structure their narratives. In his work *Realidad mental y mundos posibles* (1996) [Actual minds, possible worlds], the author emphasizes that narratives allow for the construction of "possible worlds," opening the door to imagination and creativity. This narrative capacity not only organizes events in a linear fashion, but also provides a deep and nuanced interpretation of experience, which is essential for the construction of personal and social identity. In this sense, narratives are not passive entities; they actively shape how the world is lived and understood, allowing individuals to explore different perspectives and alternatives to their current reality.

Narrative and identity according to Bruner

The relationship between narrative and identity is also a central aspect of Bruner's work. In *La educación, puerta de la cultura* (1997) [The culture of education], the author argues that identity is developed through interaction with the shared narratives of a culture. Each individual not only adopts the stories provided by their community but also rewrites those stories to construct a sense of "self" that is coherent and meaningful. This narrative identity is not static; it evolves over time, adapting to changes in the cultural environment and to personal experiences. In this way, narrative becomes a fundamental tool for the development of the "self," as it allows individuals to organize their experience, give meaning to their actions, and project their identity into the future. Bruner emphasizes that education must play a crucial role in this process by providing students with opportunities to explore and develop their own narratives within a culturally enriching context (Bruner, 1999).

Moreover, in his work *La fábrica de historias: Derecho, literatura, vida* (2003) [Making stories: Law, literature, life], Bruner demonstrates how narratives shape not only the understanding of everyday life, but also fields such as law and literature. In the judicial context, for instance, it becomes evident how stories create realities that influence legal decision-making, shaping concepts of justice and legitimacy. Narrative, therefore, is not merely a tool for understanding the world, but also a powerful means for transforming social structures and establishing new perspectives. Along these lines, in the literary realm, Bruner argues that narrative offers the possibility of exploring alternative worlds, breaking free from the rigidity of reality and allowing individuals to project themselves beyond the limits imposed by society. Literary stories, according to Bruner, enable individuals to question established norms and open themselves to new ways of thinking and being, thus contributing to social change (Bruner, 2003).

A distinctive feature of Bruner's narrative approach is its emphasis on the importance of cultural context in understanding narrative and its impact. The stories that are told and heard depend on the systems of meaning within cultures, which means that the study of narratives also involves the study of the culture in which they are embedded (Bruner, 1996). Narrative is a cultural phenomenon that not only reflects values and beliefs but also shapes them, creating a constant feedback loop between the individual and society. This feedback process implies that individual and collective narratives mutually influence one another, and that changes in one can lead to significant transformations in the other. Bruner emphasizes that understanding this process is essential for grasping how individuals and societies evolve over time (Bruner, 1996).

From a technical standpoint, Bruner challenges the traditional scientific model that seeks to reduce the human mind to a series of computational processes. Instead of conceiving the mind as a mere information processor, Bruner's narrative approach emphasizes human creativity—the capacity to imagine and construct new possibilities through storytelling. This allows for a broader and deeper understanding of human behavior, one that encompasses both emotional and symbolic dimensions. Creativity, according to Bruner, is an essential component of narrative thinking, as it enables individuals not only to adapt to their environment but also to transform it. This approach challenges the reductionist view of the mind and promotes a more holistic and dynamic understanding of the human being.

Bruner also highlights the importance of narrative in the moral and ethical devel-

opment of individuals. Both personal and collective stories provide frameworks for evaluating actions and decisions, offering a foundation for moral reflection. Through narratives, individuals can explore ethical dilemmas, consider the consequences of different actions, and develop a sense of responsibility toward others (Bruner, 2003). In this sense, narrative is not only a cognitive tool for Bruner but also a means for ethical and social development.

The role of emotions in Bruner's narrative approach

Emotions also play a crucial role in Bruner's narrative approach, as they are deeply integrated into the construction of meaning through stories. The author argues that emotions are fundamental for providing coherence and relevance to the experiences individuals narrate. The stories people tell about themselves and the world are infused with affective elements that guide the interpretation of events, which in turn contributes to the construction of personal identity (Bruner, 1991). Bruner emphasizes that narratives allow individuals to integrate their emotions into a coherent structure, facilitating the understanding of complex experiences and the coping with difficult situations. Emotions, as an inherent part of narratives, not only color lived experience but also shape and give it meaning (Bruner, 1996).

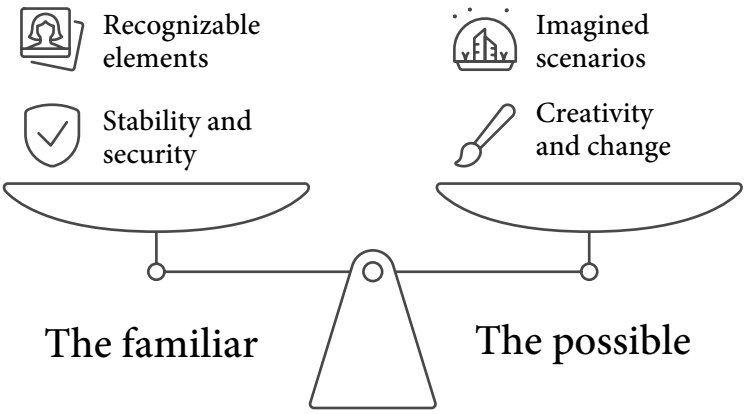
This approach emphasizes that education plays an important role in the management of emotions through narrative. Educational narratives should not only convey technical knowledge but also provide a space for students to explore their own emotions and develop a deeper understanding of themselves. The stories shared in an educational setting help students connect their emotions to their experiences, promoting holistic development in which emotions are recognized and valued as essential components of learning. This allows students not only to acquire knowledge but also to build a sense of belonging and a coherent identity (Bruner, 1997).

Dialectic between "the familiar" and "the possible" according to Bruner

The dialectic between "the familiar" and "the possible" in Bruner's thought is a fundamental concept for understanding the human capacity to imagine, transform, and adapt reality through narrative. Bruner conceptualizes this dialectic as the constant interaction between the structure of what is already known and the openness to new possibilities, which allows individuals to navigate between the security of the established and the uncertainty inherent in the unknown. This dialectic is essential to the process of meaning-making, as it places the individual in a creative tension that enables both change and adaptation (Bruner, 1996).

"The familiar" refers to those elements of experience that are recognizable and that provide a stable foundation for interpreting the world. In Bruner's narrative approach, the familiar functions as the scaffolding that supports the coherence of both identity and experience. Culturally shared narratives, internalized beliefs, and everyday habits constitute the familiar aspects that allow individuals to situate themselves within a social context. This dimension of experience provides a sense of security, as it is grounded in pre-established schemas and structures of meaning, which help individuals understand their place in the world (Bruner, 1996).

"The possible" refers to the capacity to imagine and project oneself toward new scenarios that challenge the boundaries of the known. For Bruner, narrative is a fundamental tool for the exploration of these possibilities. Through narrative, individuals are able to conceive of alternative worlds, experiment with different identities, and envision changes in both their personal lives and in society. The possible entails an openness to creativity, the ability to question established norms, and the exploration of what could be (Bruner, 1996). This capacity to imagine the possible has implications not only for personal development but also for social change, as narratives that challenge and question existing structures can generate movement toward new forms of social and cultural organization.



Process of "meaning-making" according to Bruner.

The dialectic between "the familiar" and "the possible" thus constitutes a continuous process of negotiation. Bruner emphasizes that this process is essential for human adaptation, as it allows for a balance between the stability provided by what is known and the inherent need for change and growth. This tension between the stable and the emergent is what drives individuals to reimagine their personal stories, thereby enabling the evolution of identity. Narratives, in this sense, function as a means of integrating both dimensions: they offer a coherent structure that ensures the continuity of the "self," while also providing a space for transformation and experimentation with new possibilities (Bruner, 1996).

Bruner is emphatic in asserting that the role of education is precisely to facilitate this dialectic. Education must provide students with the necessary tools to understand and situate themselves within the context of the familiar, while simultaneously encouraging them to explore the possible, fostering creativity and the capacity to question. This implies that education should not be reduced to a mere process of transmitting pre-existing knowledge, but should instead be conceived as a space for exploration and the construction of new meanings. By promoting a balance between the familiar and the possible, education contributes to the formation of individuals capable of adapting to a constantly changing world and imagining alternative futures (Bruner, 1997).

Ultimately, the dialectic between "the familiar" and "the possible" in Bruner's narrative approach underscores the importance of narrative as a dynamic process that balances stability and change. Narratives allow individuals to situate themselves within the context of the known, while simultaneously granting them the ability to imagine and project themselves toward new possibilities. This creative tension is fundamental to the development of identity, adaptation to the environment, and the capacity to generate personal and social transformations.

In conclusion, Jerome Bruner's theoretical narrative approach has been pioneering in highlighting the relevance of narratives in psychology. Stories do not merely organize experience; they also transform it, and it is through them that individuals find meaning and construct their identity within the context of their culture. Bruner's work has inspired generations of psychologists and educators to recognize the power of narrative as an essential element in human development and in the understanding of experience. His legacy endures in the way education, psychology, and cultural studies are conceived, promoting an integrative vision that acknowledges the complexity and richness of human experience. Narrative, as Bruner presents it, is the key to understanding who we are, how we relate to others, and how we can imagine and construct different futures.

The narrative therapy of White and Epston

The most widely known *narrative therapy* model worldwide was developed by Australian social worker Michael White and New Zealand family therapist David Epston. This therapeutic approach emphasizes how people construct their identity and make sense of their life experiences through the stories they tell about themselves and the world around them. Rather than viewing problems as inherent to the person, this approach externalizes them, allowing individuals to separate themselves from their problems and reassess their relationship with the difficulties they face (White & Epston, 1993).

In narrative therapy, the "narrative" aspect encompasses several key elements of human existence:

- **Construction of identity:** Identity is built through the stories each person tells throughout their life. These narratives are not merely accounts; they are the maps that guide self-understanding across time and space. By recalling past experiences, living in the present, and projecting themselves into the future, individuals create a narrative that provides them with coherence and meaning, allowing them to establish a deep connection with their essence and the world around them (White, 2016).

- **Processing of experiences:** The act of narrating enables individuals to make sense of their emotions and manage their experiences with greater clarity. In telling their stories, they do not merely recount events—they also gain distance from them, allowing for a better understanding and handling of their emotions. Thus, people find in narrative a tool for navigating their deepest feelings and organizing their

emotional life (White, 2016).

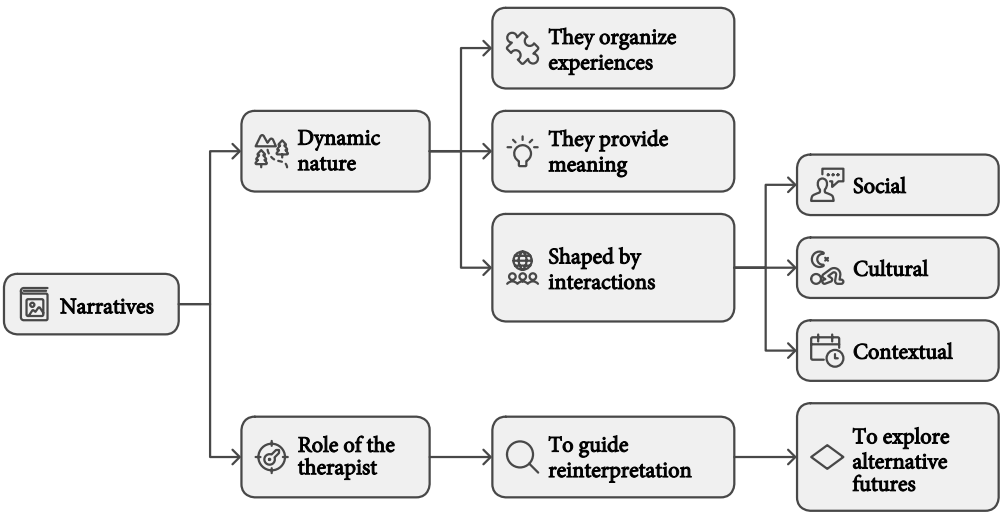
- **Communication:** Through the narratives they share, individuals do not simply convey facts; they also express their values, beliefs, and intimate experiences. These stories serve as emotional and cultural bridges, fostering understanding and empathy between people (White, 2016).

- **Problem-solving and adaptation:** By reviewing and rewriting their stories, individuals discover new ways of facing life's challenges. This process enables them not only to resolve problems but also to adapt more flexibly to change, opening themselves to more creative solutions and renewing their resilience (White, 2016).

- **Sense of purpose:** Personal narratives help individuals connect their actions and goals with their most cherished values, tracing a coherent path that aligns what they do with what they truly value. In this way, they find clear direction and deeper meaning in their daily lives (White, 2016).

White emphasizes that stories are not static accounts but dynamic constructions shaped by social, cultural, and contextual interactions. These narratives not only organize experiences but also function as frameworks through which individuals assign meaning to their lives. In this context, the therapist does not act as an expert who provides solutions, but rather as a facilitator who guides the individual in reinterpreting their stories from new perspectives and exploring possible alternative futures (White, 2016).

Elements of narrative therapy and the role of the therapist



Externalization

Externalization is a central concept in narrative therapy. This technique allows individuals to separate problems from their identity, facilitating a less oppressive relationship with them. By externalizing "problems," individuals come to see them as "external entities," which grants them greater power to influence these issues rather than feeling controlled by them (White & Epston, 1993).

This process is grounded in language and in how problems are named and described. By naming the problem as something separate from the individual, the person can begin to understand it in a less personal way, which provides greater control over their situation. Externalization empowers individuals by restoring their ability to make decisions about how to face those problems from a more objective and detached perspective.

One of the fundamental principles of externalization is that by creating distance between the individual and the problem, it becomes possible to explore how the problem has influenced the person's life and how the person has, in turn, influenced the problem. This reconsideration allows individuals to reflect on their responses and open up new possibilities for action (White, 2016; White & Epston, 1993).

Narrative maps

Narrative maps are conceptual tools that guide the therapeutic process by exploring personal stories. These maps help identify the dominant narratives that govern people's lives and often limit their experiences. By mapping out these stories, White invites individuals to externalize problems, separating them from their identity, which facilitates a more objective analysis of the effects of those narratives (White, 2016).

Through narrative maps, therapists lead conversations that help individuals rewrite their stories. One important map is that of *externalizing conversations*, which allows individuals to name and observe the problem from a distance. Another key *map is that of re-authoring conversations*, where dominant narratives are revisited to uncover forgotten aspects of the personal story that may offer a more empowering version of the self (White, 2016).

Narrative maps, therefore, help to illuminate how social, cultural, and family influences have shaped the stories people tell about themselves. This process offers individuals the opportunity to transform their narratives in order to open up new possibilities (White, 2016; White & Epston, 1993).

The re-authoring of narratives

Re-authoring is an essential component of the narrative therapy process, centered on the reconfiguration of identity through the creation of new stories. This process is based on the idea that personal narratives are malleable and that individuals can revise their life stories to discover more fulfilling alternatives.

White (2016) emphasizes that *re-authoring conversations* invite individuals to reflect on their "dominant stories," particularly those marked by problems or limitations. These conversations aim to recover moments or experiences that offer a foundation for constructing new narratives that provide relief and new possibilities for action.

This process also involves the decentralization of the problem, allowing individuals to see themselves as active agents who have resisted the influence of the problem, rather than as passive victims. In this way, new stories of strength and resilience emerge—stories that were previously hidden (White, 2016; White & Epston, 1993).

Re-authoring conversations not only transform narratives about the past and present but also make it possible to imagine a future more aligned with personal values and aspirations, thereby enabling the individual's integral development in and with their environment.

Other fundamental techniques of narrative therapy

In addition to externalization, narrative maps, and re-authoring, narrative therapy includes other essential techniques:

- **Relative influence questions:** Relative *influence questions* are a central technique in narrative therapy, aimed at helping individuals examine how problems have influenced their lives and, in turn, how they have responded to or resisted those problems. White and Epston emphasize that these questions seek to disrupt the narrative that people are passive victims of their difficulties. Through these questions, the dynamic relationship between the person and the problem is explored, allowing individuals to identify moments in which they exercised control or agency over the issue. This approach helps people see that they have more power over their situation than they initially believed (White & Epston, 1993).

- **Re-membering:** *Re-membering conversations* are another essential technique in narrative therapy, particularly useful when dealing with significant losses or separations in a person's life. For example, instead of approaching grief from a perspective of absence and lack, this technique invites individuals to recall their relationship with the loved one or lost connection in a richer and more detailed way. According to White, this process is not merely about remembering but about reviving and reconfiguring the influence of that relationship in the person's present life. In this way, the memories and positive influence of the loved one can remain present in the life of the bereaved, allowing the relationship to continue being a source of strength and support (White, 2016).

- **Therapeutic documents:** White and Epston highlight the use of therapeutic *documents* as a key tool in the narrative transformation process. These documents include letters, certificates, or statements that therapists may write for their clients to reinforce the new narratives being constructed during therapy. The letters summarize the client's achievements and progress, while the certificates acknowledge important milestones in their process of change. These documents serve as tangible reminders of the new stories and provide a way to sustain the effects of therapy beyond the therapeutic space, strengthening the new identities people are building (White & Epston, 1993).

- **Definitional ceremonies:** *Definitional ceremonies*, as described by White, are therapeutic events where individuals have the opportunity to share their reconfigured stories with others. These ceremonies allow new narratives to be recognized and validated by a community of witnesses. This type of ritual is a powerful way to shape and solidify alternative stories, as recognition by others reinforces the sense of identity the person has achieved. Being witnessed by an audience provides affirmation that helps individuals consolidate their new narrative (White, 2016).

- **Metaphors and analogies:** White and Epston also make extensive use of metaphors and analogies in their therapeutic approach. These tools are particularly useful for making problematic stories more understandable and manageable. Through metaphors, problems are externalized in creative and visual ways, making it easier for the individual to grasp and work with the issue. Moreover, metaphors allow clients to explore alternatives and new ways of understanding their stories without feeling overwhelmed by the complexities of everyday language (White & Epston, 1993).

- **Unique outcomes:** Finally, another key technique in narrative therapy is the identification and expansion of what White calls *unique outcomes*. These are moments in which the person has acted in a way that contradicts the dominant narrative of their life. Through the exploration of these unique events, therapists can help individuals uncover and expand aspects of their story that have not been fully developed. These moments of unique outcome are treated as seeds for new stories and become anchor points for imagining different futures more aligned with their aspirations and values (White, 2016).

Ultimately, the *narrative therapy* of White and Epston employs a set of techniques that enable individuals to rewrite the stories of their lives in a more empowering way. Techniques such as narrative maps, relative influence questions, and definitional ceremonies provide clear pathways to guide individuals toward a more liberated identity and a future more open to possibilities (White & Epston, 1993).

Narrative cognitive therapy

Narrative cognitive psychotherapy, as explained by Óscar F. Gonçalves in his work *Psicoterapia cognitiva narrativa: Manual de terapia breve* (2002) [Narrative cognitive psychotherapy: A brief therapy manual], is an innovative therapeutic approach that focuses on how individuals organize their knowledge and experiences through stories. Rather than conceiving the mind as a repository of responses or a set of fixed structures, narrative cognitive psychotherapy promotes a view in which language and narratives play a central role in the creation of meaning. In this sense, the goal is not only to understand the client's stories, but also to help construct new ways of making sense of their own history. Through the co-construction of narratives, the therapist and client work together to reframe experi-

ences, explore different perspectives, and foster a deeper sense of authorship over the client's life.

Theoretical foundations

Epistemology of narrative cognitive psychotherapy

From a theoretical standpoint, narrative cognitive psychotherapy is grounded in an epistemology that challenges the mechanistic and essentialist models that dominated psychology throughout much of the twentieth century. Unlike these approaches—which tend to view the human mind as a closed system of automatic responses or as a machine that processes information in a linear fashion—narrative cognitive psychotherapy advocates for a dynamic, flexible, and deeply human model.

Gonçalves (2002) argues that narrative constitutes the fundamental *organizational matrix* of knowledge. This implies that meanings are not passively found, but actively constructed through dialogue. Narrative is not merely a simple sequence of linear facts; rather, it is the structure that enables human beings to understand and give meaning to their experiences. It is the stories people tell themselves and others that allow them to integrate past experiences and project a future, providing coherence and meaning to their identity.

In the field of psychotherapy, narrative emerges as the link that connects past experiences with future possibilities, fostering an ongoing dialogue between what has already been lived and what is yet to come. Within this framework, knowledge does not remain static in the mind; rather, it develops through a continuous process of reinterpretation and re-signification. Moreover, this dialogical approach highlights the importance of interaction with others and with the environment in which one lives. Factors such as culture, context, and relationships are crucial in the construction and understanding of personal narratives.

Gonçalves's approach places particular emphasis on human subjectivity. Rather than viewing the individual as a passive recipient of stimuli, narrative cognitive psychotherapy acknowledges the creative capacity people possess to actively construct and reconstruct their stories. Subjective interpretation is key in this process, as each person assigns meaning to their experiences based on their context, emotions, and prior life events. In turn, this interpretation influences how they perceive themselves and others, as well as the decisions they make. Narrative provides a framework for exploring this subjectivity and understanding how the human experience is articulated in its entirety (Gonçalves, 2002).

A central feature of the epistemology of narrative cognitive psychotherapy is the conception of narrative as an *agent of change and transformation*. Far from viewing identity as something fixed and unchangeable, this approach posits that individuals have the capacity to change their story, which in turn transforms the way they experience life. Narrative can challenge and reshape limiting beliefs that trap individuals in dysfunctional patterns. By retelling and re-signifying their experiences, people can change their perception of themselves and open up new possibilities for being and acting in the world.

Unlike traditional models that tend to simplify human behavior through explanations based on stimulus-response mechanisms or purely cognitive processes, the narrative approach embraces the complexity of human life. It acknowledges that behavior cannot be

decontextualized from the environment or from each individual's personal history. Rather than seeking universal answers, narrative cognitive psychotherapy focuses on the particularities of each story, recognizing that each person has a unique way of making sense of their life. This perspective emphasizes that change is not merely the modification of behaviors, but a profound reconfiguration of the meaning attributed to experiences (Gonçalves, 2002).

In summary, the epistemology of narrative cognitive psychotherapy places the active construction of meaning through narrative at its core. This approach highlights the importance of subjectivity, cultural context, and relationships in the creation of knowledge. Gonçalves conceives of narrative not merely as a means of telling a story, but as the essential structure through which individuals come to understand and transform themselves. It is a dynamic and ever-changing process that links the past with the future, with the power to change people's lives by re-signifying experiences and the meanings they attribute to them. This profoundly human perspective places narrative at the heart of the therapeutic process, offering a powerful tool for personal transformation and growth.

Key concepts: Existence, knowledge, narrative, and culture

Gonçalves (2002) emphasizes four key concepts that underpin this form of psychotherapy: *existence, knowledge, narrative*, and *culture*. Each of these concepts is interrelated, forming the foundation of the therapeutic process and shaping the way human beings understand and make sense of their experiences.

Below, each of these concepts is explored in greater depth:

- **Existence and knowledge:** Existence and knowledge are intrinsically linked. Human existence cannot be separated from the knowledge constructed throughout life, as this knowledge enables individuals to interpret and assign meaning to their experience. This knowledge has a *hermeneutic nature*, meaning it is built through the ongoing interpretation of lived experiences. It is not fixed or static, but rather a process in which each person reinterprets their experiences as they face new situations and challenges. In this sense, existence is understood as a continuous process of learning and reinterpretation, in which reality is constantly being reconstructed (Gonçalves, 2002).

- **Hermeneutics as a process of meaning-making:** Hermeneutics is the fundamental tool human beings use to assign meaning to their experiences. Through *interpretation*, each individual is able to understand their reality and ultimately create a narrative that gives meaning to their existence. This hermeneutic process is neither linear nor closed; it is dynamic and recursive, implying that the meaning assigned to experiences can change over time. As people face new circumstances and challenges, they reevaluate and reinterpret past experiences, allowing for adaptation and growth. This interpretive flexibility is what makes knowledge a living process in constant evolution (Gonçalves, 2002).

- **Narrative as an open and flexible process:** In this approach, personal narrative is understood as an open and flexible process. It is not simply about telling a story of one's life, but about constructing a narrative that adapts to changing circumstances and enables the individual to re-signify their experiences. Narrative connects past, present, and future, providing a sense of continuity and coherence. As an open process, narrative is subject to change, meaning that individuals have the capacity to redefine their identity and perspectives over time. This approach not only helps people better understand their experiences, but also allows them to use that understanding to foster personal change and growth (Gonçalves, 2002).

- **The role of language in meaning-making:** Language plays a crucial role in the construction of meaning. It is the medium through which personal narratives are expressed and shared, and the tool through which interpretations of experience are articulated. Through language, individuals shape their thoughts and emotions, share their perspective with others, and at the same time receive new interpretations that enrich their narrative. Narrative cognitive psychotherapy uses language as a vehicle for change, helping clients reconfigure their life stories and discover new ways of interpreting their experiences in more adaptive and enriching ways (Gonçalves, 2002).

- **The influence of cultural context:** Finally, culture plays a fundamental role in the construction of meaning. Personal narratives do not exist in a vacuum; they are deeply influenced by the meanings and values circulating in society. Cultural context provides the framework through which experiences are interpreted and validated. Narrative cognitive psychotherapy acknowledges the importance of cultural context in shaping narratives and works to help clients identify how these cultural values and beliefs have influenced their personal stories. Moreover, the therapist supports the client in challenging and, when necessary, reconstructing these cultural narratives so they can be more consistent with the client's individual values and needs (Gonçalves, 2002).

In conclusion, the four key concepts of narrative cognitive psychotherapy—existence, knowledge, narrative, and culture—interrelate to form the foundation of this therapeutic approach. Existence and knowledge are mutually constructed through a hermeneutic process of continuous interpretation, while narrative provides a flexible framework that allows experiences to be re-signified over time. Language and cultural context play fundamental roles in how these narratives are constructed and validated. This approach recognizes that identity and human well-being depend on the ability to reinterpret and reconstruct personal stories, which is essential for adaptation and personal growth.

Relational knowledge and the co-construction of therapeutic meanings

The narrative approach is also grounded in the idea that knowledge is inherently relational and contextual (systemic). In other words, meanings are not generated in isolation, but are constructed through interaction with others and within a specific context. This

underscores the importance of dialogue and the co-construction of meaning between therapist and client. Therapy thus becomes a safe space where the client can explore their narratives, challenge those that feel limiting, and construct new stories that promote greater well-being. The therapeutic relationship is transformed into a collaborative act in which both the client and the therapist actively participate in the creation of new meanings, highlighting the deeply human and social nature of the change process (Gonçalves, 2002).

The temporal dimension of narrative

Finally, it is proposed that narrative also has an essential temporal dimension. The way individuals organize their experiences in terms of past, present, and future influences how they perceive their lives and their potential for change. In narrative cognitive psychotherapy, a temporal integration is encouraged that enables the client to view their life not as a series of disconnected events, but as a coherent story with continuity and purpose. This temporal integration helps the individual understand how past experiences have shaped their present, while also allowing them to envision a future filled with new possibilities. The ability to project oneself into the future with positivity and hope is a key element for resilience and personal growth (Gonçalves, 2002).

In conclusion, the theoretical principles of narrative cognitive psychotherapy emphasize the central role of narrative as an organizing tool for human knowledge and experience. Narrative not only gives meaning to life events but also enables individuals to reorganize their reality and construct a more adaptable and flexible identity. This approach recognizes that the human mind does not function as an isolated information processor, but is deeply influenced by cultural context, language, and interpersonal relationships. Hermeneutics and the co-construction of meaning are established as essential pillars for understanding and facilitating therapeutic change, highlighting the transformative power of the stories people tell themselves in shaping their lives and well-being.

Psychotherapeutic technical foundations

Regarding its technical foundations, narrative cognitive psychotherapy focuses on helping clients reconfigure their personal narratives. For Gonçalves, psychological difficulties are related to dysfunctional *narrative coherence*—a structure that fails to meaningfully connect lived events—or to limited *narrative complexity*, which prevents the individual from integrating the emotional, cognitive, and contextual aspects of their experiences. In this sense, one of the goals of psychotherapy is to help the client achieve greater coherence and complexity in their stories. By fostering a more coherent narrative, the individual can develop a deeper sense of identity and authorship, which empowers them to better face life's challenges (Gonçalves, 2002).

Organization and articulation of narrative content

The organization and articulation of narrative content are based on how a person's stories are structured and how they impact psychological well-being. Beyond the actual content of the narratives, what is crucial is their structure and articulation. Within the

framework of narrative cognitive psychotherapy, the aim is to reconfigure the dysfunctional stories people tell about themselves in order to promote more adaptive, flexible, and enriching versions of their lives.

The process begins with becoming aware of repetitive narrative patterns that lead to emotional stagnation or rigidity. According to Gonçalves, it is essential for the therapist to help clients identify these patterns and explore new versions of their personal story that incorporate alternative perspectives. This narrative shift is not merely a revision of facts, but a profound reconfiguration aimed at assigning new meanings to life experiences, allowing the person to open up to different ways of interpreting their past, present, and future (Gonçalves, 2002).

Narrative transformation is made possible through therapeutic techniques designed to help individuals recognize how their stories influence their emotional well-being. Gonçalves emphasizes that this process of change is not merely a cognitive exercise, but an emotional and relational journey in which meanings are rewritten with a renewed perspective. Therapeutic success lies in the client's ability to reorganize their life stories, integrating new narratives that allow them to see themselves as active protagonists rather than passive victims of their own history (Gonçalves, 2002).

In this way, narrative cognitive psychotherapy becomes a powerful tool for transforming dysfunctional personal narratives into stories of resilience and emotional growth.

The therapeutic technique of narrative deconstruction

The therapeutic technique of *narrative deconstruction* assigns the therapist a crucial role—not as an expert who dictates solutions, but as a guide who accompanies the client through the delicate process of dismantling the stories that have shaped their perception of themselves and the world around them. The therapist thus becomes a facilitator of change, someone who, with patience and empathy, invites the client to examine those absolute and rigid narratives that have confined their identity (Gonçalves, 2002).

Therefore, this technique is a profound and transformative process that goes beyond merely questioning the stories. It involves identifying those parts of the narrative that reinforce limiting beliefs—those that perpetuate feelings of stagnation and suffering. By dismantling these stories, a space is opened for the client to view their history in a new light—one that allows them to reinterpret their experiences in a more flexible, compassionate, and empowering way (Gonçalves, 2002).

This process is neither immediate nor easy. It requires the therapist to adopt a stance of genuine curiosity, approaching each narrative with an open mind and without judgment. The therapeutic setting becomes a refuge where the client can explore their deepest beliefs without fear of criticism or invalidation. Within this space of emotional safety, the client dares to question their certainties, to explore new interpretations, and ultimately to construct a more enriching story—one that allows them to move toward the future with greater freedom and possibility (Gonçalves, 2002).

Thus, narrative deconstruction not only allows for the transformation of beliefs, but also facilitates a process of personal rediscovery, in which the client can connect with aspects of themselves that they had not previously recognized or valued.

The therapeutic technique of re-authoring

Another relevant psychotherapeutic technique is *re-authoring*. This involves a deeply human and collaborative process, in which therapist and client embark together on the task of reconstructing the client's story. Far from being a superficial or mechanical exercise, re-authoring draws on the therapist's ability to help the person rediscover key moments that—although real—have remained hidden or blurred within the dominant narrative the client has constructed about themselves (Gonçalves, 2002).

The therapist, from a place of genuine empathy, guides the client in identifying those meaningful moments that, when viewed from a new perspective, reveal possibilities for change, resilience, and personal strength. It is not about inventing a new story or altering the facts of lived experience, but about illuminating aspects that had been ignored or minimized, allowing a richer and more complex narrative to emerge—one that reflects not only pain or difficulty, but also the client's courage, achievements, and capacity to overcome adversity (Gonçalves, 2002).

In this co-constructive process, the therapist creates a safe space where the individual can reexamine their life through a lens of greater compassion and openness. As old narratives—often limiting or painful—begin to dissolve, a new story starts to take shape, one that not only validates past experience but also opens doors to a future full of possibilities (Gonçalves, 2002). Re-authoring, therefore, is a powerful therapeutic tool that invites the client to reclaim the role of protagonist in their own life, recognizing their capacity to write new chapters filled with growth, well-being, and meaning.

Stages of the therapeutic process

The therapeutic process described by Gonçalves (2002) includes several stages that reflect the richness and diversity of human experience: *remembering*, *objectification*, *subjectification*, *metaphorization*, and *projection*. Each of these stages is explained below to clarify their role in the reconfiguration of personal narratives:

- **Remembering:** This is the first stage of the therapeutic process and involves bringing past events that have shaped the client's life into conscious awareness. It allows for the exploration of personal stories and how they have been structured over time. Through remembering, the individual can identify patterns that have influenced their development and contributed to their current narrative. The therapist facilitates this process, helping the person recall not only painful events but also those moments that may have been overlooked or underestimated (Gonçalves, 2002).

- **Objectification:** Objectification involves analyzing experiences from a more distanced and objective perspective. In this stage, the client learns to view their experiences from an external standpoint, which allows them to observe the stories they have told themselves without being emotionally entangled in them. This distancing is key to questioning and challenging limiting beliefs built over time. Objectifica-

tion helps depersonalize experiences, allowing the individual to view their problems more clearly and with less emotional charge (Gonçalves, 2002).

- **Subjectification:** Subjectification is the opposite of objectification, as it involves emotionally reconnecting with the experiences that were previously objectified. Here, the person re-engages with their emotions and lived experiences from a new perspective, enabling a re-signification of those events. This stage is essential for the client to fully experience and validate their emotions while reinterpreting their experiences in a way that fosters growth and personal transformation (Gonçalves, 2002).

- **Metaphorization:** Metaphorization is a fundamental stage that allows individuals to express their experiences through images and analogies. This technique facilitates the communication of complex emotions and thoughts in a more accessible and meaningful way. Using metaphors enables the client to give new meaning to their experiences, making the abstract more tangible and understandable. Metaphorization also helps create a safe distance between the subject and their experiences, which supports the process of re-signification and change (Gonçalves, 2002).

- **Projection:** Finally, projection is the last stage of the therapeutic process, in which the client begins to envision a different future based on the reconfiguration of their personal narratives. In this phase, the individual projects new possibilities for their life, using the resources acquired during the previous stages. Projection is crucial for fostering hope and motivation for change, helping the person set realistic goals and build a sense of purpose for the future (Gonçalves, 2002).

Integration of the stages

The integration of the different stages of the therapeutic process represents a deeply transformative journey in which the therapist and the client, as co-explorers, embark on the reconfiguration of life stories. This journey is neither linear nor predetermined; rather, it unfolds as new perspectives are discovered and past experiences are re-signified—always approached with openness and collaboration. Each stage has its own value, but it is in their integration that the true richness of the therapeutic process is revealed.

The combination of *objectification* and *subjectification* is a crucial point in this journey. By distancing themselves from their experiences, the client gains a broader and more neutral perspective, allowing them to observe their story with less emotional weight. However, it is not merely about creating distance; the process also invites the individual to emotionally reconnect with those very same experiences (Gonçalves, 2002). This back-and-forth between distance and emotional connection fosters a more balanced and nuanced understanding, in which the client can integrate both head and heart into their personal narrative.

On the other hand, *metaphorization* and *projection* serve as powerful tools for transformation. Metaphorization allows experiences—often difficult to express directly—

to take on new forms through the use of symbols and metaphors, facilitating a richer and more accessible expression. Projection, in contrast, offers the possibility of envisioning a different future—one in which the client's new narrative is aligned with their desires, values, and potential for growth (Gonçalves, 2002). These two tools not only broaden the client's understanding of their past but also open the door to a more adaptive and hopeful future, bringing to life a narrative that is more enriched, complex, and profoundly human.

Narrative psychopathology

Gonçalves states that the foundations of the concept of *narrative psychopathology* are based on the core idea—already discussed—that the "construction of meaning" is the fundamental aspect of human knowledge, and that it is expressed through a "narrative discourse," which is often constructed in a *dysfunctional* manner. The author identifies three central dimensions of the "narrative matrix" that must be considered in this analysis, as they either enable or hinder the existence of a narrative characterized by coherence, complexity, and multiplicity. These dimensions are (Gonçalves, 2002):

a) **Narrative structure:** This refers to the process by which different aspects of the narrative are connected in a way that provides a coherent sense of authorship. Narrative coherence depends on both the static and dynamic elements of structural organization (Gonçalves, 2002).

b) **Narrative process:** This includes aspects such as richness, quality, variety, and complexity in the stylistic production of the narrative. The author highlights the importance of the five modes or stages of the therapeutic process for functional change: remembering, objectification, subjectification, metaphorization, and projection (Gonçalves, 2002).

c) **Narrative content:** Finally, this aspect refers to the diversity and multiplicity of the individual's narrative production. The author argues that psychopathology is correlated with the existence of specific narrative *prototypes* that impose limitations on one's experience (Gonçalves, 2002).

Gonçalves's conceptualization of "narrative psychopathology" highlights the fundamental importance of narrative in the construction of *human meaning* and how it is articulated through these three key dimensions, which enable a narrative existence characterized by coherence, complexity, and multiplicity. This offers a rich and detailed perspective on how individuals construct and communicate their experiences (Gonçalves, 2002).

In this regard, the author suggests that psychopathology can be understood through the limitations imposed by specific narrative prototypes, affecting how individuals experience and narrate their world (Gonçalves, 2002). This approach opens pathways for addressing psychological suffering not only by identifying and analyzing *restrictive narrative patterns* but also by fostering the emergence of richer and more complex narratives that allow for greater freedom and authorship in the construction of identity and personal experience.

An intervention example of this could involve the re-authoring of the personal narratives of an individual suffering from depression. This process would begin by identifying the *narrative prototypes* the individual uses to interpret their experience—for instance, a story that emphasizes incapacity, loss, and failure, thereby reinforcing their depressive state.

In this context, the therapist would work alongside the client to explore and unravel: a) *The structure* of these narratives, paying special attention to how they are constructed and sustained over time; and b) *The narrative process*, in which the professional would encourage the individual to enrich and add complexity to their own narrative by identifying exceptional moments in which they felt capable, successful, or happy—thus generating a healthy contradiction to the dominant narrative centered on incapacity.

Together, therapist and client would work on creating a *new narrative* that incorporates these exceptional moments, using previously discussed techniques—such as *metaphorization* to conceptualize the experience of depression in a different way, and *projection* to imagine possible futures in which the individual sees themselves acting with agency and competence.

This intervention approach aims to expand the multiplicity and diversity of the individual's: c) *Narrative content*, offering new ways to understand and narrate their experience—shifting from a position of limitation toward one of greater openness and possibility. This process not only challenges the restrictive narrative prototypes that sustain psychopathology, but also promotes the emergence of a richer and more complex narrative identity, facilitating psychological change and well-being.

In conclusion, narrative cognitive psychotherapy represents a deeply transformative approach that humanizes the therapeutic process by placing emphasis on the stories people tell about themselves. From this perspective, the personal narrative is not merely a passive record of lived events, but the central axis through which individuals organize their reality, construct meaning, and shape their identity. This form of therapy recognizes that psychological difficulties are often rooted in rigid and limiting narratives that have trapped individuals in dysfunctional patterns of thought and behavior.

What is revolutionary about this approach lies in its ability to generate profound change through the re-signification of past experiences, promoting the co-construction of new narratives that offer greater flexibility, coherence, and complexity. The therapist, far from being a mere observer, becomes an active collaborator who guides the client through the process of deconstruction and re-authoring of their stories, fostering a deeper understanding of the self and their environment.

Moreover, this approach does not overlook the cultural, social, and relational context in which personal narratives are developed, allowing for a broader and more nuanced understanding of human experience. Narrative cognitive psychotherapy enables the client to reinterpret their life from new perspectives, which not only transforms the way they view the past but also allows them to project a more hopeful and possibility-filled future.

In this way, the therapy aims not only to alleviate emotional suffering but also to empower individuals to become active protagonists of their own story—capable of writing new chapters filled with growth, resilience, and meaning.

General conclusions of the theoretical framework

As has been shown, the theoretical framework of the TCCR is grounded in a solid and extensive interdisciplinary foundation that integrates various approaches to provide a deep and nuanced understanding of human psychosocial relational construction. Drawing from philosophical and sociological perspectives—such as phenomenology, social constructionism, and critical sociocultural approaches—it explores the intersubjective interpretation of the world and the power relations within society.

At the same time, relational approaches such as the systemic, memetic, and bioecological models examine how connections and cybernetic communicational spaces between individuals and their environment shape their experiences, beliefs, and behaviors. In addition, psychotherapeutic approaches such as cognitive-behavioral and narrative therapy—which currently have the strongest scientific support in the field—allow for a more precise description of the psychological mechanisms that shape individuals' psycho-emotional meaning-making in response to everyday life phenomena.

This integration of multidimensional perspectives enables the TCCR to offer a comprehensive and dynamic view of how human beings construct their reality through their relationships, experiences, and life narratives.

Together, these theoretical approaches build a solid epistemological and methodological foundation for the TCCR by integrating subjective experience, the social construction of meaning, the individual construction of knowledge, and the critical capacity to question dominant psychosocial structures. This theoretical proposal aims to offer a framework for psychosocial research and intervention that is reflective, flexible, and adaptive—acknowledging both the particularity of human experiences and the influence of the sociocultural context on people's lives.

The TCCR, therefore, is not limited to a static perspective of reality; rather, it is grounded in a dynamic vision that recognizes the complexity and multiplicity of factors affecting both the individual and their environment.

For all the reasons outlined above—and as will be explored in greater depth throughout this book—the TCCR presents itself as a powerful tool for research, analysis, and intervention in Social Work, as well as in any other discipline seeking a comprehensive and profound understanding of the psychosocial relational construction of human beings.

The central focus of this theory advocates for professional practice that is not only sensitive to the particularities of the individual context, but also oriented toward justice and social equity, promoting the empowerment of individuals and the deconstruction of structures that perpetuate inequality. By articulating these approaches, the TCCR aims to generate a transformative impact both at the individual and community levels, fostering a praxis capable of responding to the complex challenges of contemporary realities and contributing to the construction of a more inclusive and just society.

4. CONSTRUCTION OF THE THEORETICAL PROPOSAL

THE COGNOSYSTEMIC THEORY of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction (TCCR)—hereafter also referred to as the *Psychosocial Cognosystemic Theory* or simply *TCCR*—not only presents a new paradigm for understanding narrative dynamics within social systems, but also redefines how human interactions are deeply rooted in cognitive and systemic structures that coexist and continuously reinforce one another.

The theorization methodology underlying the TCCR reflects a rigorous commitment to a comprehensive understanding of these phenomena and is based on a triad of processes—abduction, deduction, and induction—that interact to construct a coherent and applicable theoretical framework.

The creation of this theory is not merely an intellectual exercise, but a living process that responds to the need for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of psychosocial relationships. In an increasingly interconnected and complex world, the TCCR seeks to explain how human narratives, in their constant interaction, not only reflect realities but also shape and transform them.

This approach aims to transcend the limitations of traditional theories by proposing a more fluid and adaptable vision of intersubjective interactions—as open cogno-narrative systems that continuously evolve and feed back into one another. Thus, the TCCR is not only a theory to be understood, but also a tool to transform and reconstruct social and personal dynamics through a new understanding of human psychosocial relational construction.

This methodological journey not only aimed to construct a robust theoretical proposal, but also offers a new lens through which to intervene in and transform psychosocial

realities. It aspires for the TCCR to establish itself as an indispensable tool for professionals seeking to understand and modify the narrative systems that shape human experience within the vast complexity of today's sociocultural landscape.

Theorization methodology

The methodological construction of the *Cognosystemic Theory of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction* (TCCR) has been developed based on a comprehensive approach that includes three fundamental processes in the creation of this new theoretical framework. The phases considered are as follows:

1) The abduction phase.

2) The deduction phase.

3) The induction phase (as a future challenge for new research initiatives).

Each of these processes plays a crucial role in the formation and consolidation of the theory, contributing in a unique way to the development of a theoretical framework that is not only coherent and robust but also applicable and reliable in practical contexts of professional intervention.

Stage 1: Theoretical abduction process

The process of theoretical abduction in the construction of the TCCR represented a crucial step in the development of this newly proposed theoretical framework, as it focused on generating innovative research questions and hypotheses based on the observation of complex and dynamic phenomena that cannot be fully explained by existing theories.

This process differs from induction and deduction in that it does not aim to generalize observations or derive logical conclusions from established premises. Instead, abduction focuses on identifying and formulating the best possible explanation for a set of observed data or phenomena that would otherwise lack a coherent or comprehensible interpretation.

According to Magnani and Bertolotti (2017), abductive reasoning, in the context of research, is a process that is activated when an epistemic agent encounters a striking fact that is not fully addressed by any existing scientific explanation. This process generates an explanatory hypothesis whose plausibility becomes the subject of conjecture. The genuine outcome of an abductive inference is not necessarily the truth of the hypothesis, but its plausibility.

Abduction is characterized as a non-monotonic inferential process, meaning that the conclusion is provisional and may be revised as new information becomes available.

Furthermore, it is noted that abduction may involve the creation of new concepts or shifts in awareness, making it a process common to both science and everyday reasoning.

Abductive logic, in this sense, is formalized in terms of abductive problems and solutions. An abductive problem arises when a given statement cannot be derived from the current theory, and the abductive solution is defined as the additional information that completes the theory in order to explain the observed fact (Magnani & Bertolotti, 2017).

In the context of the TCCR, theoretical abduction allowed the researcher to focus attention on how narrative systems profoundly and multifacetedly influence the everyday construction of psychosocial relationships. This process revealed the existence of narrative patterns and dynamics that existing theories in disciplines such as social psychology, hermeneutics, or social constructionism, among others, could not fully explain.

For example, situations were identified in which individual and collective narratives not only shaped perceptions and relationships, but also interacted in complex ways with social and cultural structures—adapting and evolving in response to environmental changes, and vice versa.

A clear case is that of organizations, such as companies, where narratives of personal competitiveness often clash with idealized organizational narratives, such as that of teamwork. These narratives influence workplace dynamics and are transformed by the macrosocial culture of the community and country, as well as the individual and family culture of each employee—forming a systemic web that, to date, no theoretical framework has been able to explain or address with plausible analytical consistency.

Through abduction, it began to be posited that these interactions were not merely anecdotal or exceptional, but rather reflected a broader, systemic process that required a new theoretical explanation. This form of abductive reasoning was fundamental in proposing that narratives could be understood as "narrative systems" that are part of a larger ecosystemic "supra-system." This proposition was based on empirical observations in the everyday practice of psychosocial intervention across multiple areas, where narratives are seen not as functioning in isolation, but as undeniably interconnected with one another—and as capable of both influencing and being influenced by other narrative systems operating at different psychosocial levels.

In this sense, theoretical abduction within the TCCR also made it possible to articulate additional explanatory proposals. For example, it has been proposed that narratives function as organized systems that interact and adapt in response to crises and contextual changes. Moreover, these narratives appear to follow a life cycle and are in constant feedback with human emotions, which either reinforce or transform them during times of crisis.

It has also been observed that narratives possess an autopoietic systemic capacity, self-regulating without the need for continuous external stimuli, while simultaneously interacting across multiple ecosystemic levels and mutually influencing one another.

In this context, the existence of narrative plasticity and inter-narrative frictions has also been identified as facilitating the mechanisms of adaptation and evolution within the supra-system—or Cognosystem—challenging hegemonic social narratives and triggering changes within a kind of hierarchical sociocultural structure that tends to emerge inside the supra-system due to the human drive for power.

However, it has also been observed that certain narratives, due to their nature, resist change and seek to propagate themselves through meaning-transmission vehicles that

enable interaction and co-evolution among narrative systems, thus promoting narrative diversity, a key element for social cohesion.

In summary, the abduction stage in the design of the TCCR theoretical proposal was primarily an exercise in intellectual creativity and inferential analytical rigor, during which research questions and hypotheses were formulated (to be presented later) that offered new perspectives on narrative dynamics and their impact on the construction of psychosocial reality.

This approach made it possible to formulate a theory that not only explains the observed phenomena, but also opens new pathways for research and intervention in psychosocial contexts within Social Work and other social science disciplines—providing a theoretical framework that is both flexible and adaptable for understanding the complexity of human narratives.

Stage 2: Theoretical deduction process

The process of theoretical deduction in the TCCR was also a crucial step that followed the formulation of research questions and hypotheses generated during the abductive inferential process. According to Magnani and Bertolotti (2017), the abductive process generates the initial hypothesis or hypotheses, while deduction is used to explore their logical consequences, predicting outcomes that can later be tested through a process of inductive validation. This dynamic cycle of abduction, deduction, and induction forms the core of the process of theoretical construction and validation in science.

In the TCCR, theoretical deduction was employed to develop and formalize the key concepts that emerged from the abductive hypotheses, allowing for a systematic and coherent organization of ideas within a logically consistent and applicable theoretical framework.

For example, once the hypothesis of the "Cognosystem" was proposed, the deductive process made it possible to derive specific components of this narrative supra-system, such as axioms or general principles that support the theoretical explanation of the hypothesis. From these, fundamental concepts were then formulated through the exercise of systematic logical deductions.

In this context, theoretical deduction in the TCCR involved rigorous precision in defining the axioms or general principles upon which the theory would be founded. Axioms such as the idea that narratives are not static entities but dynamic processes that organize human experience served as the basis for logically deriving a series of elements and processes within the Cognosystem.

From this foundation, concepts were developed—such as "multilevel feedback," which holds that human narratives operate within a cybernetic dynamic, interacting across multiple ecosystemic levels and mutually feeding back into one another. From this concept, logically derived sub-concepts emerged, such as "upward feedback," "downward feedback," and "horizontal feedback," among other theoretical components included in this proposal.

Moreover, the deductive process allowed for the exploration and attempted pre-

diction of the practical and theoretical implications of the derived components. For example, starting from the notion of circular feedback within the Cognosystem, the dynamics of stability and change that may arise within any type of open system—in this case, a human "narrative system"—were deduced.

This approach made it possible to anticipate how narratives may mutually reinforce one another or come into conflict, and how these dynamics can affect the cohesion and adaptability of the system as a whole.

The deductive process not only structured the theory but also aimed to build the internal coherence essential for its application in research and psychosocial practice. By logically deriving the implications of the abductive hypotheses, theoretical deduction in the TCCR sought to ensure that each of its components was interrelated and that the theoretical framework could be consistently applied across different contexts.

This deductive rigor is what is intended to ultimately enable the TCCR not only to explain observed narrative phenomena but also to offer practical tools for intervening in psychosocial relational construction within complex and ever-changing environments.

Ultimately, the theoretical deduction stage in the TCCR was essential for transforming innovative hypotheses into an organized, coherent, and applicable theoretical framework. Through deduction, the goal was to develop a logical structure that not only explained how narrative systems function within the Cognosystem, but also provided a set of analytical and practical tools to address the complexity of human narratives in their interaction with psychosocial reality.

Stage 3: Theoretical induction process

Finally, the process of theoretical induction in the TCCR represents a crucial phase in the future validation and refinement of the theory. According to Magnani and Bertolotti (2017), induction is used to validate hypotheses and theories through empirical observation and the accumulation of evidence. Once abductive reasoning generates an explanatory hypothesis and deductive reasoning explores the logical consequences of that hypothesis, inductive reasoning is responsible for confirming or refuting those consequences through observation or experimentation. In this way, *abduction* generates possible explanations, *deduction* predicts what should be observed if the hypothesis is correct, and *induction* verifies whether the predictions are consistent with reality.

As previously explained, this iterative cycle is fundamental to the robust development of scientific theories.

In this sense, the theoretical induction process is intended to serve the purpose of testing and refining the principles and concepts of the TCCR—derived from the previous phases—based on empirical data and practical cases that emerge over time.

As the theory is applied in real-world contexts, such as professional psychosocial interventions, organizational analyses, or cultural studies, the resulting observations will allow future researchers to assess the validity of the proposed theoretical elements.

For example, when applying the theory in a specific context, such as conflict mediation within a community, observations regarding the interaction of narratives as open

systems and the influence of the proposed elements of the Cognosystem on conflict resolution may lead to adjustments and refinements of the theoretical components, ensuring their empirical relevance and accuracy.

This inductive process is especially important for the TCCR, as it is a theory based on the dynamic and constantly evolving interaction of narratives within the Cognosystem. Induction allows for the observation of how these processes manifest in practice, providing valuable insights for adjusting the theory.

For example, if the application of the TCCR in a particular context reveals that certain narrative dynamics do not behave as the theory predicts, this leads to a reevaluation and potential revision of its theoretical postulates. This kind of empirical feedback is essential for ensuring that the theory remains not only relevant, but also flexible and capable of adapting to new realities and challenges.

Theoretical induction also plays a key role in expanding the scope of the TCCR. As the theory is applied across a variety of contexts—from clinical to cultural or educational settings—the general conclusions drawn from these applications may lead to the development of new concepts or the reformulation of existing ones.

For example, by observing how collective narratives transform in response to social crises, theorists may identify new dynamics or interactions within the Cognosystem that had not been previously considered, thereby enriching and expanding the theory.

In summary, the theoretical induction process in the TCCR is essential for the future validation, refinement, and expansion of the theory. By allowing empirical observations to influence the theory's evolution, induction ensures that the TCCR remains not only a robust and scientific theoretical framework but also a practical and adaptable tool for understanding and transforming psychosocial reality.

This inductive approach strengthens the TCCR's ability to remain relevant in a constantly changing world, providing a solid foundation for effective intervention across diverse narrative-relational contexts.

For this reason, it is essential that Social Work professionals, along with universities and research centers, be encouraged to develop studies and investigations based on the TCCR. Collaboration between the academic field and professional practice will not only allow for the validation and refinement of the theoretical components of the TCCR but also expand its application to new psychosocial contexts and challenges.

This call to action seeks to promote an ongoing dialogue between theory and practice, where empirical research in Social Work drives the evolution of the TCCR—establishing it as a key tool for social transformation and effective intervention, ultimately contributing to the improvement of quality of life for individuals and communities.

Conclusion of the overall methodological process

In conclusion, the three key processes in theoretical construction—*abduction*, *deduction*, and *induction*—constitute the methodological backbone for the development and refinement of the TCCR. These methods will allow the theory to evolve in a logical and coherent manner and, over time, to be empirically validated through future research.

This methodological approach ensures that the TCCR contributes meaningfully in

both theoretical and practical domains, offering a new perspective for understanding and addressing the complex psychosocial interactions that shape human experience within the cognosystemic environment. All of this is grounded in a theoretical body aligned with the foundational and original principles of Social Work.

Formulation of inferential abductive questions and hypotheses

Construction of research questions

1. Existence of a large set of sociocultural narratives

From the perspective of General Systems Theory (GST), individual human narratives cannot be understood in isolation within the sociocultural realm, as they are all part of a web of dynamic interactions. As outlined in the theoretical framework, GST, developed by Bertalanffy (1989), states that any "open system" maintains a constant exchange relationship with its environment, which allows it to adapt and evolve.

This principle can be applied to the analysis of human narratives, which—like systems—exist in a context of constant interaction and interdependence. Personal, family, community, and cultural narratives influence one another and are in a continuous process of adaptation and reconfiguration, depending on the influences they receive from their environment and from the other narratives that surround them.

From this perspective, narratives can be understood as systems that evolve through interaction with their context. The central idea of GST is that each part of a system contributes to the functioning and adaptation of the whole.

In the case of narratives, this means that each individual story is connected to and integrated with other narratives, forming a coherent whole that is continuously adapting. This perspective suggests that individual experiences are always in dialogue with a broader network of shared meanings, and that narratives mutually transform one another as people interact and face new challenges or contextual situations.

On the other hand, social constructionism —particularly the ideas of Berger and Luckmann (2003)—emphasizes that social reality is a construction that emerges from interaction between individuals. According to this approach, the meanings people assign to their experiences result from a collective process of negotiation and validation, which implies that individual narratives are intertwined with shared narratives that shape social reality.

Personal narratives are developed and take shape within a broader cultural and social context that gives them meaning and legitimacy. Thus, individuals do not construct their stories in isolation; rather, they rely on a shared cultural and social framework that defines the boundaries and possibilities of what can be narrated.

Furthermore, from the perspective of Schütz's social phenomenology, human experience is understood as being structured within the context of the everyday life-world (Lebenswelt), which is composed of the interactions and shared meanings that individuals collectively construct. The narratives people build to make sense of their lives are not solely the product of personal experiences, but also the result of an intersubjective process involving other individuals and the cultural and social structures of their environment.

This process of "constructing shared meanings" implies that individual narratives are always connected to collective narratives, and that both are in a constant process of reinterpretation and adjustment.

Finally, from a systemic and relational perspective, personal and collective narratives must be seen as part of a system in which meanings are constructed, maintained, and transformed through a continuous feedback process. Each narrative contributes an essential component to the system of shared meanings, and this system adapts to new experiences and contextual changes through the interaction among the various narratives that comprise it.

This view suggests that it is not possible to understand a narrative in isolation, as each one is part of a broader web of meanings that mutually influence and transform one another.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 1:

How do individual and collective narratives interact and become reconfigured within a broader systemic context?

2. Society as a narrative construction

Social constructionism, primarily based on the contributions of Berger and Luckmann (2003), provides a solid foundation for understanding society as a narrative construction. From this perspective, social reality is not something given or objective, but rather it is constituted through human interactions and the meanings that individuals collectively attribute to their experiences.

This approach emphasizes that society is composed of a network of shared meanings, which are maintained and transformed through the continuous interaction among individuals. In this context, narratives play a fundamental role as vehicles through which people construct and sustain social reality.

The concept of society as a narrative construction implies that the structures and social systems perceived by human beings as real are, to a great extent, the result of a collective process of narrative construction and validation.

Berger and Luckmann assert that human beings internalize certain frames of reference, ideas, and values through the process of socialization, which enables them to position themselves and act within a given social context (Berger & Luckmann, 2003). These frames of reference are presented in the form of narratives that explain how the world and society function, providing a sense of coherence and stability. In this way, collective narratives operate as an organizing framework, establishing what is considered legitimate, which behaviors are expected, and what meanings are assigned to everyday events.

Collective narratives not only serve to provide structure and coherence to society, but also enable adaptation to contextual changes and challenges.

Like an open system, society is in constant exchange of information and is subject to external influences that provoke the evolution and transformation of its structures. From the perspective of systems theory, collective narratives allow society to maintain its "homeostasis" by integrating new experiences and challenges without losing internal cohesion. In this sense, the ability of narratives to reconfigure and adapt to change is fundamental to the stability and continuity of the social structure. Collective narratives function as a kind of sociocultural contract that individuals accept, whether consciously or unconsciously, and that enables social cohesion and communal life.

This kind of sociocultural contract, to which individuals adhere, is composed of a network of meanings and values sustained through repetition and interaction. Schütz's social phenomenology (2003) complements this understanding by emphasizing that the reality of everyday life is grounded in an intersubjective world where meanings are constructed through encounters with others.

In this context, society is configured as a stage where individual narratives are integrated and contribute to the construction of a shared narrative, which serves as a frame of reference for all members of the community. Schütz highlights that as individuals interact, they develop typifications and meaning schemes that allow them to orient themselves within their social world (Schütz, 1972, 2003; Schütz & Luckmann, 2001). In this way, collective narratives not only structure social reality but also facilitate communication and understanding among individuals by providing a common language and a set of shared meanings.

The flexibility of collective narratives allows society to continuously adapt to changes in the social and cultural context. As an ongoing process of construction and reconstruction, society is always open to the incorporation of new narratives, whether arising from individual experiences or broader structural changes.

This adaptive capacity lies at the core of social resilience, as it enables society to integrate new experiences and challenges while maintaining a coherent and functional structure. In this way, collective narratives provide a dynamic balance between what is established and what is emerging, which is essential for maintaining social cohesion.

Social constructionism, for its part, invites reflection on the nature of the narratives that shape society. These narratives, although collective, are not always homogeneous nor free of conflict.

Society is undeniably composed of a plurality of narratives, some of which, as can be observed in everyday life, may be dominant while others are subordinate. Dominant narratives, often linked to power structures, are generally the ones that define what is accepted as "real" and determine the values and norms that govern social life. However, emerging narratives, which arise from the experiences of less represented groups, also play a crucial role in social transformation, as they challenge dominant narratives and create space for new ways of understanding and organizing social reality.

This process of negotiation and conflict between narratives is fundamental to the evolution of society and to the incorporation of new perspectives and voices within the social fabric.

In conclusion, from the perspective of social constructionism, society must be understood as a narrative construction that is sustained and transformed through the interaction between individuals and the collective narratives they develop and share. These narratives function as a sociocultural contract, providing coherence and structure to social

reality and enabling continuous adaptation to changes in the environment. The capacity of collective narratives to evolve and reconfigure in response to contextual challenges is essential for social cohesion and resilience, as it ensures that society maintains its functionality and coherence within a constantly changing context.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 2:

How do narrative constructs and social structures intertwine to form and sustain the shared perception of "society" as an intersubjective reality in constant adaptation?

3. Narratives as open systems

Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory (1989) holds that open systems maintain a continuous exchange of information, energy, and matter with the environment in which they exist. These systems are capable of adapting to external influences and, through a process of self-regulation, achieving a dynamic equilibrium that allows them to remain functional and relevant (Arnold & Osorio, 1998). This characteristic of open systems can be directly applied to human narratives, which operate in a similar manner by maintaining constant dialogue with their environment and reconfiguring themselves in response to contextual changes and challenges.

From the perspective of open systems, narratives can thus be understood as dynamic entities that are neither closed nor isolated but, on the contrary, are permeable and receptive to external influence. Each individual narrative is constructed through interaction with other narratives and with the cultural, social, and material context in which it develops. This continuous exchange process allows narratives to be updated and transformed while maintaining their coherence and relevance in the face of new experiences and challenges. In this way, narratives function as organized systems of meaning, enabling individuals to structure their perception of the world and make sense of their experiences. Through this constant exchange, narratives not only transmit information but also act as filters and organizers of human experience, allowing individuals to understand their place in the world and act accordingly.

The open nature of narratives is also manifested in their ability to adapt and evolve. In systems theory, adaptation is an essential process for the survival and evolution of open systems (Arnold & Osorio, 1998). Similarly, human narratives adapt to new circumstances, changing and reorganizing themselves in response to environmental influences. This adaptive capacity lies at the core of narrative resilience, as it enables individuals to reinterpret their personal stories in light of new experiences and changes in the social context. In this

sense, narratives are not rigid or immutable structures; rather, they are in constant evolution, reconfiguring themselves to incorporate new meanings and experiences. This process of adaptation is fundamental to the construction of personal identity, as it allows individuals to integrate past and present experiences into a coherent and meaningful narrative.

Social constructionism, on the other hand, offers a complementary understanding of narratives as open systems. From this perspective, the meanings people attribute to their experiences are neither individual nor static; rather, they are constructed through interaction with others (Berger & Luckmann, 2003). In this regard, it is evident that human narratives develop and change within the context of interpersonal and social relationships, where individuals negotiate and validate shared meanings. This intersubjective construction of reality implies that narratives are in a constant state of flux and change, depending on social interactions and shifts in the cultural context. Social reality, therefore, is a process of ongoing construction and deconstruction, where personal and collective narratives mutually influence one another and reorganize in response to new situations and challenges. This process of constructing shared meanings highlights the open and flexible nature of narratives, which allows individuals and groups to adapt their stories and beliefs to the changing conditions of the social environment.

Social phenomenology also provides an important dimension for understanding the open nature of narratives. Schütz (2003) argues that human experience is always situated within a context of intersubjective relationships, where individuals construct meaning through interaction with others. From this perspective, narrative is not merely an individual expression, but rather develops within the context of the "lifeworld" (lebenswelt), an intersubjective realm in which meanings are collectively constructed and shared. Like open systems, narratives are subject to external influences and are continuously transformed as people interact and reinterpret their experiences in light of new contexts and relationships. This ongoing process of reinterpretation and adjustment is essential for understanding social reality and for the construction of a coherent and meaningful identity.

The open nature of narratives is also reflected in their ability to integrate and reconcile contradictory or novel experiences. As individuals encounter new challenges or situations that do not align with their preexisting narratives, those narratives must be adjusted to accommodate the new experiences. This process of adjustment and reconfiguration is a manifestation of the inherent flexibility of open systems and is crucial for maintaining their coherence and continuity (Arnold & Osorio, 1998). The capacity of narratives to incorporate new experiences and reorganize their internal components allows individuals to preserve a sense of coherence and stability, even amid change. In this way, narrative functions as an open system that enables individuals to integrate new experiences, reorganize meanings, and maintain a sense of continuity in their lives.

In conclusion, narratives as open systems are characterized by their ability to interact with the environment, adapt to change, and evolve as individuals face new experiences and challenges. This process of interaction, feedback, and continuous reconfiguration is fundamental to the construction of meaning and to individuals' adaptation within a constantly changing social environment. From the perspectives of General Systems Theory and social constructionism, it can be asserted that human narratives are dynamic and flexible systems that enable individuals to structure their experience, make sense of their lives, and adapt to contextual changes. The capacity of narratives to function as open systems is

essential for the construction of personal identity and for the understanding of social reality.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 3:

How is a human narrative structured as an open and organized system that not only communicates information but also shapes the perception of "reality"?

4. Life cycle of narrative systems

The process of change and adaptation in narratives can be effectively analyzed through General Systems Theory and social constructionism—perspectives that allow for the observation of how human narratives evolve and adjust according to their context. Narratives, as organized systems of meaning, are not fixed elements; on the contrary, they are subject to continuous development, which leads them to transform and adapt in response to new experiences and environmental changes. This process is essential for understanding how shared meanings, structured through narratives, maintain their relevance and enable individuals and communities to adapt to changing conditions.

Within the framework of systems theory, it is understood that any open system must be capable of exchanging information and adjusting to environmental influences in order to maintain its functionality. Prigogine and Stengers (1984), for their part, propose that open systems do not evolve in a linear fashion, but rather through a series of "cycles" of order and disorder. According to these authors, such cycles are essential for the evolution and survival of open systems. Another scholar, Miller (1978), also contributed to this idea through his concept of the "life cycles" experienced by living systems in general, which go through stages of birth, growth, maturity, and decline. This perspective can be applied to human narratives, which emerge as responses to specific situations in which individuals seek to make sense of their experiences. For example, in their initial stages, a narrative is constructed in an attempt to interpret and explain events that lack a stable structure of meaning, thereby providing a coherent organization that allows individuals to situate themselves within a broader frame of reference. In this phase of emergence, the narrative develops in an unstable and flexible manner, adjusting through collective validation and reinterpretation as it takes shape.

In this logic, the subsequent development of narratives involves a process of consolidation, in which they are strengthened through recurrent use and social acceptance. In this phase, the narrative becomes organized and establishes consistent patterns of meaning, allowing individuals and groups to interpret it as a reliable frame of reference for understanding their experiences. Social constructionism is particularly relevant here, as it emphasizes the importance of interaction and social validation in the construction of meaning

(Berger & Luckmann, 2003). As a narrative is used and shared, it acquires a stabilizing role within the group, becoming a common tool for understanding and structuring both individual and collective experiences. This process of consolidation reinforces the narrative, granting it a relevance that turns it into a central element of cohesion and belonging.

In its phase of stability, a narrative becomes a widely recognized frame of reference that guides individuals' perceptions and behaviors within a social context. This point of stability does not imply that the narrative is entirely rigid or static, but rather that it has reached a level of legitimacy and acceptance that allows it to function as a "shared truth" or a normative structure within the group. Schütz's social phenomenology helps to understand this phase by emphasizing that individuals internalize narrative schemes and typifications that enable them to navigate the world in a predictable and meaningful way (Schütz and Luckmann, 2001). At this stage, the narrative becomes consolidated as a structuring guide that provides individuals with a "stable perception" of reality and a coherent way of interacting with their environment.

However, change in narratives is inevitable when they begin to lose their ability to account for new experiences and respond to emerging contextual challenges. As society and individual experiences transform, narratives may cease to be useful or relevant. Systems theory posits that the inability of a system to adapt to external changes results in a loss of functionality (Minuchin, 2004), which is equally applicable to narratives. When a narrative can no longer adequately explain perceived reality, it begins to be questioned and may eventually be replaced by new interpretive structures that better meet the needs of the moment. Although some narratives may resist change due to cultural entrenchment or social inertia, they are ultimately compelled to transform if they are to maintain their meaning and relevance.

The phase of renewal or restructuring of narratives is a process in which they are reconfigured to integrate new meanings and adapt to current conditions. In this phase, narratives incorporate external influences and are reinterpreted in light of new experiences, allowing them to evolve and remain functional. The ability of narratives to open themselves to transformation is key to their resilience, as it enables them to reorganize in response to social and cultural changes. Social constructionism emphasizes that narratives are not immovable entities, but are in constant construction and deconstruction according to the contexts and social relationships that shape them. In this process of renewal, individuals and communities reinterpret their experiences and reorganize their narratives, creating new versions that reflect their present reality.

In summary, the process of change and adaptation in narratives reflects the dynamic nature of human experience and the constant need to make sense of reality under diverse conditions. Each phase of this process—from emergence to restructuring—represents a moment in which narratives interact with context and adapt to maintain their coherence and relevance. The evolution of narratives is, ultimately, a reflection of the human capacity to reinterpret experience and adapt to changing circumstances, which is essential both for the construction of personal identity and for social cohesion. In this sense, narratives as systems in continuous transformation are a key tool for adaptation and resilience, providing individuals and communities with a way to organize their experience and maintain a sense of purpose and meaning over time.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 4:

What internal and external dynamics and conditions influence the development of the life cycle of human narrative systems?

5. Emotional-narrative feedback

From the perspective of cognitive psychology, emotions are closely tied to the meanings individuals assign to their experiences (Beck et al., 2010). In this sense, narratives—which are, in simple terms, beliefs in the form of stories—function as organizing frameworks of meaning, influencing the emotional interpretation of events. When a person constructs a narrative around an experience, the meaning attributed to that event determines the emotion they will feel about it. For example, a challenging experience may be framed as a step in personal growth, generating emotions of resilience, or interpreted as a failure, leading to frustration. This process reveals how narratives provide a context in which emotions find coherent expression and organization.

In the realm of social constructivism, emotions are understood to be shaped by cultural expectations and norms. Collective narratives provide the interpretive frameworks that guide emotional expression in specific contexts. Through socialization, individuals learn to interpret their emotions according to these frameworks, thereby aligning themselves with the cultural norms of the community. For example, grief or success may be experienced with particular emotional expressions depending on the shared narrative context in which they are framed. Thus, cultural narratives not only give meaning to emotions but also regulate their expression according to the expectations of the group.

In this regard, the narrative theoretical approach—particularly narrative therapy—offers a nuanced understanding of this emotional-narrative feedback. Narrative therapy, developed by Michael White and David Epston (1993), posits that individuals construct their identity and understanding of life through personal stories, which are not merely tales but organizational structures of meaning. In therapeutic practice, the process of externalization enables individuals to emotionally distance themselves from their problems, viewing them as aspects separate from their identity. This technique allows individuals to modulate their emotional responses by understanding that the problem is not a fixed part of who they are, but rather something they can interact with from a new perspective.

Narrative cognitive therapy, as proposed by Gonçalves (2002), emphasizes the importance of reorganizing dysfunctional narratives that hinder emotional processing and well-being. Narrative is viewed as the organizational matrix of knowledge, enabling individuals to integrate and reframe past experiences within a coherent and meaningful framework. In this process, the therapist helps to construct new forms of understanding, which

facilitates emotional transformation. This co-construction of narratives allows the client to reframe experiences, enrich their narrative identity, and foster a greater sense of authorship over their life.

On the other hand, the post-rationalist cognitive approach of Vittorio Guidano (1994) contributes the idea that individuals reorganize their emotional experiences within a coherent narrative in order to stabilize their sense of identity. According to this perspective, emotions are not merely automatic reactions but complex forms of knowledge that profoundly influence how people perceive and make sense of the world. The narrative structures that constitute identity include emotional, affective, and sensory components that are not always explicitly reflected in individuals' life stories. These emotional elements enrich human experience, providing a depth that transcends the mere narrative content (Balbi, 2004).

This approach also emphasizes that emotions regulate both thought and action, functioning as a system that facilitates adaptation and survival. Emotions not only determine goals but also drive mental organization and behavior. In this post-rationalist view, emotions are considered essential for self-knowledge and personal change, forming the foundation upon which each individual organizes personal meanings and constructs a self-aware identity (Balbi, 2004). Consequently, post-rationalist therapy seeks to help individuals reorganize their experiences in order to better integrate their emotions and achieve a stable and functional narrative that enables them to manage their emotions constructively.

Finally, within the phenomenological approach, emotions are not merely biological responses but relational acts embodied within the intersubjective context. For Merleau-Ponty, emotions connect the individual to their environment, giving meaning to lived experience through direct and pre-reflective perception (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, 2002). Based on this view, it can be inferred that emotions and the narrative of experience mutually influence one another: an intense emotion may reinforce a preexisting narrative, consolidating an implicit interpretation of the world, while situations of emotional dissonance may lead to the need to reconfigure that narrative in order to integrate the emotion into a coherent and meaningful story.

In conclusion, emotional-narrative feedback appears to be a bidirectional process in which both elements mutually shape one another, structuring the perception of reality and identity. Narratives function as organizers of emotions, allowing them to be framed within a story that provides meaning and direction, while emotions act as forces that reinforce or transform narratives. This interaction is key to psychosocial well-being and adaptation, as it enables individuals and communities to process reality coherently, enriching the construction of meaning in everyday life.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 5:

How does the feedback between emotions and narratives manifest, and in what ways does this interaction affect the stability and evolution of narratives

across different psychosocial contexts?

6. Emotions as agents of narrative change

As previously discussed, from a theoretical perspective, emotions are an essential component in the construction and transformation of narratives, as they act as dynamic forces that can reinforce or challenge the interpretations individuals and communities hold about their experiences. Through the interaction between emotions and narratives, people not only organize their understanding of the world but also adapt their personal and collective stories based on the emotional experiences they encounter. Emotions, therefore, are not merely responses to specific events; they become active agents of narrative change, capable of prompting adjustments in how individuals and communities structure and reinterpret their stories.

In this regard, according to Bruner's narrative approach, emotions not only accompany the recounting of experiences but are structural elements that give meaning to the narrative, facilitating the creation of a coherent framework that allows individuals to organize and process their lived experiences. Emotions, being intrinsically tied to the narrative process, provide an affective foundation that reinforces the authenticity and depth of both personal and collective stories (Bruner, 1991). According to the author, by structuring emotions within narratives, individuals not only succeed in making sense of complex experiences but also find ways to overcome adversity by reinterpreting and revaluing difficult events within an emotionally meaningful context (Bruner, 1996). Thus, emotions not only add color to experiences but also serve as pillars in the construction of personal meaning, becoming active tools for coping and resilience.

Following this same logic, from the perspective of post-rationalist cognitive psychology, emotions are understood to be closely related to the meanings individuals assign to their experiences, and they influence how individuals interpret and narrate their reality. An intense emotion can trigger a process of reevaluation in which individuals reconsider the interpretations they have given to certain events, resulting in a change in their personal narratives (Balbi, 2004). For example, a traumatic or significant experience may challenge a narrative of safety and stability, generating emotions that compel the individual to reconfigure their interpretation of the world in order to integrate this new experience. This process of narrative change driven by intense emotions reflects the capacity of narratives to adapt and evolve in response to significant emotional shifts.

In a complementary manner, narrative cognitive therapy proposes that emotions can act as catalysts that drive change in dysfunctional or limiting narratives. Through the exploration and re-signification of emotions within a therapeutic context, individuals can transform their beliefs and narratives, modifying previous interpretations of their experiences (Gonçalves, 2002). This emotional transformation, fostered in the therapeutic setting, enables the construction of a renewed narrative that reflects a greater sense of acceptance and strength in the face of difficult experiences. The reorganization of the narrative based on emotions thus becomes a therapeutic strategy that allows individuals to construct more positive and functional meanings.

Finally, from the perspective of social constructivism, it can be inferred that emotions not only affect individual narratives but also influence the shared narratives within a community. Collective emotions—such as fear, hope, or indignation—can become agents of change that alter dominant narratives or generate new ways of understanding shared reality. It is readily observable in everyday life that, in contexts of crisis or social change, collective emotions tend to catalyze the reconfiguration of the interpretive frameworks people use to make sense of their reality, allowing new narratives to emerge that reflect the shared experiences and expectations of the present context. A clear example of this phenomenon was observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the midst of the global health crisis, many communities experienced a profound shift in how they interpreted everyday life and social relationships. The uncertainty, fear, and collective solidarity that emerged during lockdown transformed perceptions of what safety, well-being, and connection with others mean (Pawar, 2021).

In this logic, emotions can also act as disruptors of the established narrative, generating tensions that lead to questioning previously assumed personal and collective stories. When emotions do not align with the established narrative, they can provoke a dissonance that compels individuals to reassess their interpretations and reorganize their narrative to integrate the new emotional experience. This process of narrative adjustment becomes a mechanism that facilitates adaptation and resilience, allowing individuals and communities to maintain a coherent perception of reality even in times of change. For example, an intense emotion such as pain or loss can destabilize a narrative of control and security, forcing the individual to construct a new interpretation that includes and accommodates this experience.

In conclusion, it is evident that emotions act as agents of narrative change by challenging and transforming the interpretive structures through which individuals and communities organize their understanding of reality. Emotions not only add an experiential dimension to narratives, but they can also become driving forces that enable people to adapt and renew their personal and collective stories. The capacity of emotions to reconfigure narratives in response to new or intense experiences is essential for meaning-making, adaptation to change, and the construction of a coherent identity, providing individuals and communities with a powerful tool for processing reality in a meaningful way.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 6:

How do emotions, especially in times of crisis, act as drivers for the modification of narratives and the construction of new interpretations of reality?

7. Narrative autopoiesis

The concept of autopoiesis, originating in systems theory and developed by Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, describes the capacity of a system to self-organize and maintain coherence without the need for continuous external stimuli. This principle of self-organization can be applied to the analysis of human narratives, which function as systems that construct and sustain internally coherent meanings to structure identity and the perception of reality. In this logic, narratives would not rely solely on external influences, but would possess a degree of autonomy that allows them to be self-sustaining and to evolve based on their own internal elements and processes—a phenomenon that could be described as narrative autopoiesis.

Within the framework of systems theory, an autopoietic system is one that contains within itself the necessary elements for its continuity, organizing itself in a self-referential manner to produce and reproduce its components through an internal process (Maturana & Varela, 1997). In the case of narratives, this self-referentiality is observed in individuals' ability to sustain their personal stories through the reinterpretation and adjustment of experiences and meanings that already exist within the narrative itself. Narratives function as self-regulating systems, integrating new experiences in ways that preserve the coherence and continuity of identity, thereby avoiding significant disruptions in the perception of the self and the world. In this way, narrative autopoiesis enables individuals to adapt to change without losing their sense of continuity, internally reorganizing meanings so that each new experience finds its place within the established narrative.

Social constructionism emphasizes that knowledge and reality are constructed through a continuous process of interaction and social agreements (Berger & Luckmann, 2003). However, this approach also acknowledges that, once internalized, narratives can operate autonomously within the individual's mind, functioning as autopoietic systems that structure their identity and understanding of the world. Although narratives are initially developed within a social and cultural context, individuals are capable of sustaining and adapting these narratives internally, creating a subjective reality that maintains its coherence over time. This autopoietic process allows individuals to integrate their experiences within a meaningful framework, achieving an internal stability that enables them to act consistently within their social environment without requiring continuous validation of their meanings.

Within the framework of systemic autopoiesis, language is conceived as the essential bridge between two dimensions: the individual and the social. It is understood not merely as a means of communication, but as a powerful structuring mechanism that defines the boundaries of a system and enables the preservation of its internal organization. From this perspective, language does not simply transmit information; it also generates and sustains the social realities in which it is embedded (Luhmann, 1998). Narratives, as human systems, operate through language, structuring and reproducing the frameworks that shape shared perceptions and meanings. This suggests that narratives are essential for the self-generation and evolution of systems, as they are vehicles of meaning that configure their symbolic environment. In line with this view, Maturana and Varela assert that language plays a constitutive role in the construction of shared realities, and is therefore a fundamental pillar in the autopoiesis of human systems (Maturana & Varela, 2003).

Under this logic, autopoietic systems are distinguished by their ability to establish

internal boundaries that separate them from their environment. In social systems, these boundaries are constructed and sustained through language, which functions as a key resource for defining which elements belong to the system and which do not (Luhmann, 1998). Maturana and Varela argue that language not only delineates the system but also establishes the rules and norms that regulate its behavior (Maturana & Varela, 1997). This function of language—creating and maintaining boundaries—is essential for autopoiesis, as it enables social systems to adapt and evolve without losing their fundamental identity.

On the other hand, autopoiesis from a cognitive perspective is understood as a process in which language plays a crucial role in the creation of meaning. Maturana and Varela explain that cognition emerges as an intrinsic function of the autopoiesis of living beings, where language goes beyond mere communication, becoming a cognitive system that organizes and gives meaning to experience (Maturana & Varela, 2003). In this view, meaning-making is essential for autopoiesis, as it is through language that both individuals and social systems are able to comprehend and structure their reality.

Considering narrative as a human system, language thus fulfills an essential function in defining, preserving, and modifying the boundaries that sustain the identity of autopoietic systems. This mechanism enables them to adapt to changes in the environment and evolve without losing their essence. In social systems, language not only ensures the continuity of their internal structures but also paves the way for the creation of new realities through symbolic and communicative exchange (Luhmann, 1998). Based on the work of Maturana and Varela, it can be inferred that language not only sustains societies but also enables them to construct and renew their shared narratives, thereby reinforcing their autopoietic nature and their capacity to shape meaning in dynamic interaction with the environment.

From the perspective of psychotherapeutic approaches, narrative autopoiesis is observed in individuals' capacity to construct and sustain narratives that uphold their identity and ensure the continuity of their sense of self (Guidano, 1994), even in the face of difficult or transformative experiences. Narrative therapy and narrative cognitive psychotherapy emphasize that individuals, through their personal stories, create a framework of meaning within which their experiences gain coherence and significance (White, 2016; Gonçalves, 2002). This self-organizing capacity enables individuals to internalize values, beliefs, and perceptions that are integrated into the narrative, generating a self-referential system that organizes and sustains their identity. In the therapeutic context, narrative autopoiesis thus becomes a fundamental resource for working with clients' experiences, as it facilitates a process of reality reinterpretation that allows the integration of difficult experiences into a coherent and resilient narrative.

Narrative autopoiesis also explains why certain narratives may resist change despite external influences. Since they self-organize and maintain coherence through internal processes, a significant emotional event or an intense external intervention is often required to provoke a structural change. This self-referential mechanism causes narratives to tend toward stability, reinforcing themselves through a process of internal repetition and reinterpretation of experiences in ways that align with the existing narrative. This resistance to change is key to understanding how narratives structure identity in a stable manner, providing a sense of continuity and cohesion that allows individuals to act and perceive themselves consistently over time.

In conclusion, it is evident that narrative autopoiesis is a process of self-organization that enables individuals to maintain and adapt their personal and collective stories in an autonomous and self-referential manner. Through this process, narratives not only integrate new experiences but also ensure the stability and coherence of identity and the perception of reality. This self-regulatory capacity is fundamental for psychosocial adaptation, as it allows individuals and communities to construct and sustain meaning over time, promoting continuity of experience and a stable sense of identity. In this regard, narrative autopoiesis represents a powerful tool for meaning-making, providing a framework that organizes experience and enables individuals and communities to face environmental changes and challenges without losing their basic identity structure.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 7:

In what ways does autopoiesis allow narratives to self-organize, maintain their coherence autonomously, and at the same time facilitate their interrelation with other narratives in the environment?

8. Narrative multilevels

The notion of narrative multilevels arises from a broad theoretical approach that integrates phenomenology, social constructionism, GST, and, most notably, Urie Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model. Each of these frameworks provides key conceptual tools for understanding how narratives operate across different levels and psychosocial contexts. Within this framework, it becomes evident that individual narratives do not exist in isolation; rather, they are embedded within a complex web of familial, community, organizational, and cultural narratives that interact continuously and dynamically. This multilevel narrative structure enables individuals to construct their identity within a context of shared meanings, offering both stability and flexibility in the interpretation of their experiences.

The premise, based on the principles of GST, is that any complex system—such as human narrative systems—is composed of subsystems organized in a hierarchy that facilitates adaptation through feedback (Arnold & Osorio, 1998). When applied to the realm of narratives, this systemic principle makes it possible to understand that personal stories, functioning as complex systems, are always configured in interaction with narratives at different levels, such as family or cultural narratives, which provide context and meaning. Each level serves a specific function and integrates with the others, forming a cybernetic system of meanings—that is, a hierarchical structure of interdependent and constantly interacting systems and subsystems. This systemic hierarchy enables both individual and collective narratives to maintain internal coherence while adapting to changes occurring at higher or lower levels of the narrative network.

In this same vein, the bioecological perspective further expands this understanding by proposing that individuals develop their identity and comprehend their reality through a series of interrelated environmental systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1987). From this approach, each type of narrative can be inferred as a systemic level—or psychosocial narrative ecosystem layer—that both influences and is influenced by individual and collective experiences. The microsystem, for example, which represents the immediate context of individual interactions, is the space where personal narratives are formed through direct contact with family, friends, and other significant actors. As individuals engage with the mesosystem, personal narratives intertwine with other narratives across different contexts, such as school or work, integrating experiences that broaden their sense of identity.

In the exosystem, narratives are influenced by external structures and institutions that, although they do not interact directly with the individual, affect their daily life. In this way, institutional policies or organizational values impact personal narratives even if the individual is not actively involved in those systems. Finally, in the macrosystem, which encompasses the culture and values of society, cultural narratives establish broad interpretive frameworks that guide individuals' perceptions and values across all other layers of the system. The influence of the macrosystem on individual narratives allows these to be structured within a cultural framework that sets shared norms and expectations, thereby integrating the individual's identity into a culturally meaningful reality.

This idea of a multilevel structure helps explain how each narrative ecosystem interacts with the others using the framework proposed by Bronfenbrenner, facilitating adaptation and alignment across these layers or levels. For example, personal and family narratives can influence the macrosystem by introducing new values or cultural perspectives through social movements or changes in social norms. Likewise, changes in the macrosystem can transform personal and family narratives, adjusting perception and identity according to evolving values and expectations. This bidirectional process suggests that the multilevel structure of narratives enables continuous interaction and feedback between levels, which is essential for individuals and communities to adapt to changes in their social and cultural environment.

Social constructionism, for its part, offers a relational understanding of narratives by emphasizing that meanings are collectively constructed and validated through continuous interaction. Cultural narratives, for example, provide interpretive frameworks that guide individuals' perceptions and values, which are internalized and incorporated into their personal stories. This interaction between narrative levels enables individuals and communities to develop a shared understanding of reality that facilitates communication and social cohesion. By integrating these narratives, a multilevel structure is established—ranging from the individual to the social—where each level of meaning contributes to the construction of a collective identity that both coheres and structures experience.

From the perspective of social phenomenology, on the other hand, narratives are understood not only as social constructions but also as structures that shape individuals' lived experience. Each narrative level provides a referential framework of meanings that guides perception and interaction in the world, allowing individuals to make sense of their lives in relation to others. The meaning schemes and typifications that emerge from this multilevel structure offer a sense of continuity and belonging that connects the personal with the social. In this way, each narrative contributes to an experiential identity that links

the individual's perspective with the social context, creating cohesion and meaning in everyday life.

In conclusion, the multilevel structure of narratives—supported by systems theory, social constructionism, phenomenology, and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model—offers a framework for understanding how individual experiences are integrated into a broader system of meaning. Each narrative level interacts with and adjusts to the others, creating a network of shared meanings that facilitates adaptation and social cohesion. This multilevel structure, which spans from the personal to the cultural, enables narratives to respond to changes in the environment, fostering a coherent identity and a shared understanding of social reality.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 8:

In what ways are individual, organizational, and cultural narratives organized and mutually reinforced within a multilevel sociocultural system?

9. Interconnectivity and narrative feedback

The concept of interconnectivity and narrative feedback arises from the complex relational dynamics observed among the different types of narrative systems that shape both personal and social reality. From this perspective, it becomes clear that individual, familial, cultural, and organizational narratives do not function as isolated compartments; on the contrary, they are in constant interaction and mutual influence. This feedback process enables narratives to adapt and maintain their coherence over time. In this context, GST, cybernetics, and social constructionism, among other approaches, provide essential theoretical tools for understanding how these narratives are interwoven in a relationship of interdependence and how, through feedback, they remain dynamic and adjustable in response to changes in their environment.

GST, in particular, emphasizes that complex systems—such as narrative systems—maintain their cohesion and functionality through continuous feedback processes that enable self-regulation (Bertalanffy, 1989). In the context of narratives, this implies that each narrative level—whether individual, familial, organizational, or cultural—interacts with other levels through a constant flow of information and meaning. This feedback facilitates narrative alignment, fostering a coherent structure that allows individuals and communities to experience a sense of continuity and belonging. When a higher-level narrative, such as a cultural one, undergoes significant change, lower-level narratives (individual or familial) are affected, and in turn, individual or familial reactions and adaptations can influence the cultural level. This bidirectional feedback process ensures that narratives adjust and evolve in response to contextual changes, maintaining a flexibility that enables adaptation

to environmental challenges.

Along the same lines, second-order cybernetics offers a valuable perspective for analyzing the process of interconnectivity and feedback with even greater nuance. From this approach, the observer does not merely observe the system but is also a part of it, and through active involvement, reflexively influences its dynamics (Foerster, 2003). In social systems, these systems generate their own rules, and the actors within them actively participate in both their maintenance and transformation (Geyer & Van der Zouwen, 2001). Consequently, each narrative level not only adjusts in response to external stimuli but also adapts through the reflection and reinterpretation of those who participate in it—individuals who observe and modify their own meanings. The presence of the observer within the system adds a layer of complexity to narrative feedback, wherein meanings are constructed, questioned, and reconfigured based on the internal perceptions and experiences of each participant. This implies that narratives not only influence one another but are also actively and consciously shaped, fostering a self-organization that allows narrative systems to remain dynamic and evolve in harmony with contextual changes.

Social constructionism, for its part, holds that the meanings people attribute to their experiences are constructed and sustained through interaction with others (Berger & Luckmann, 2003). Within this framework, narratives are developed through a collective process of validation and adjustment, in which individuals actively participate in the creation of shared meanings. The interconnectivity among narratives thus allows individual meanings to be integrated into a system of collective values and beliefs, thereby fostering social cohesion. As narratives feed back into one another, individuals internalize these shared meanings and use them to structure their personal stories. Narrative feedback, in this context, enables shared meanings to be continuously adjusted, so that each member of the community can reinterpret their experiences and adapt them to social norms and expectations. This not only enriches the personal narrative but also reinforces collective identity, creating a system of interdependence in which individual and collective experiences are mutually shaped and adjusted.

Narrative feedback is also crucial in moments of change or conflict between narratives, as it enables adjustments in individual or collective interpretations to accommodate contradictory experiences or emerging meanings. When a dominant narrative is confronted by an alternative narrative that challenges its structure of meaning, a tension is created that activates a feedback process in which narratives must be readjusted or transformed to reach a new state of stability. This process of interaction and adjustment not only allows for the adaptation of narratives but also promotes the evolution of the overall narrative system by integrating new perspectives that enrich the collective framework of meaning. In this way, narrative feedback becomes a dynamic adjustment mechanism that facilitates the integration of divergent experiences, fostering a flexible and adaptive structure.

From a systemic perspective, the interconnectivity and feedback among narratives also ensure that the global system remains stable and functional over time. Narratives at different levels—such as individual and cultural—are in a constant feedback relationship, such that changes at one level affect and are affected by adaptations at other levels. This feedback dynamic allows the narrative system to respond coherently to changes in the environment, adjusting its internal structures to maintain relevance and functionality. Thus, interconnectivity and narrative feedback facilitate systemic self-regulation, enabling the

adaptation and resilience of the macrosystem of shared meanings, and providing individuals and communities with a stable foundation for understanding their reality and confronting contextual challenges.

In conclusion, interconnectivity and narrative feedback are essential processes that allow individual and collective narratives to remain coherent and adaptive. Systems theory, cybernetics, and social constructionism emphasize that narratives—across multiple levels—are engaged in a continuous process of adjustment and mutual influence that fosters cohesion and responsiveness to contextual demands. This feedback process enables narratives to evolve and respond to change, facilitating a flexible and adaptive structure of meaning that provides individuals and communities with a sense of continuity and belonging in an ever-changing environment.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 9:

In what ways do human narrative systems interact and feed back across different psychosocial levels, facilitating their continuous adaptation and mutual reconfiguration?

10. Narrative plasticity

The concept of narrative plasticity refers to the capacity of human narratives—as open systems—to adapt and transform in response to experiences and changes in the social, emotional, and cultural context. This flexibility is essential for narratives to remain relevant and functional in diverse and evolving environments. Narrative plasticity (the unlimited capacity for adaptation) allows individuals and communities to reinterpret their stories and adjust them to new circumstances while preserving a sense of identity and coherence. This concept is grounded in GST, social constructionism, and various psychological approaches that explore how these types of psychosocial systems can be modified and reorganized to reflect and give meaning to constantly changing life experiences.

According to GST, any open system—including the narrative system—must be capable of adapting and reorganizing in order to remain functional within a changing environment: a systemic property known as "morphogenesis" (Arnold & Osorio, 1998). This adaptability is precisely the foundation of narrative plasticity, as it allows personal and collective stories to adjust in response to both internal and external influences. The evident capacity of human narratives to be plastic enables a reconfiguration that prevents significant ruptures in identity or sense of belonging, allowing individuals and communities to integrate new experiences without losing the coherence of their narrative. Systems theory posits that such plasticity is essential for resilience, as it allows systems to modify themselves according to circumstances, thereby maintaining their cohesion and functionality.

Social constructionism, for its part, holds that meanings are not fixed or static entities but are the result of a continuous process of construction and negotiation (Berger & Luckmann, 2003; Bruner, 1991). Narratives, like meanings, must be flexible in order to adapt to changes in the social and cultural context in which they develop. As people interact and share experiences, personal and collective narratives are adjusted and reconfigured, incorporating new perspectives and values. Narrative plasticity allows individual narratives to adapt to the norms and expectations of the culture in which they are embedded, while also granting individuals the capacity to reinterpret and transform those same norms based on their own experiences. This process of adaptation and transformation is essential for social integration and for maintaining a coherent identity that aligns with the changing demands of the environment.

In this same vein, from a phenomenological perspective, the experience of reality is always dynamic and relational, which requires a flexible narrative capable of accounting for changes and fluctuations in personal and collective experience. Phenomenology emphasizes that the perception of reality is in constant flux, and that lived experience is fundamental to the construction of meaning (Merleau-Ponty, 1993). In this context, narrative plasticity allows individuals to adapt their narrative systems to changes in their perceptions and emotions, adjusting their stories to integrate new experiences and meanings. This process of adjustment enables the narrative to maintain its coherence and relevance, while also providing a framework of meaning that organizes experience in a way that is both comprehensible and significant.

Psychological approaches, on the other hand, emphasize the importance of narrative plasticity in the process of personal transformation and in coping with difficult experiences. Narrative therapy, for example, holds that people can rewrite their stories to develop alternative narratives that promote well-being, resilience, and a sense of agency (White, 2016; White & Epston, 1993). An individual's ability to modify their narrative—reinterpreting past experiences and projecting new meanings into the future—is a clear example of narrative plasticity. In the therapeutic setting, the process of narrative rewriting enables individuals to transform dysfunctional narratives into empowering ones by integrating new perspectives that foster personal growth and development. Narrative plasticity thus becomes a key tool in psychotherapy, allowing people to adjust their personal stories to more effectively face emotional and psychological challenges.

In narrative cognitive therapy, narrative plasticity is observed in the process of reorganizing and re-signifying lived experiences. This approach proposes that the beliefs and meanings people assign to their experiences can be modified to promote a more positive and functional understanding of reality. The ability to restructure the narrative allows individuals to integrate new experiences in a way that strengthens their sense of agency and authorship over their lives, which is essential for building a resilient and adaptable identity (Gonçalves, 2002). In this sense, narrative plasticity enables individuals to adapt to emotional and contextual changes without losing the sense of continuity and coherence in their personal narrative.

Narrative plasticity is not only relevant at the individual level but also extends to the collective and cultural levels. Cultural and organizational narratives must be plastic in order to adapt to social and cultural changes, enabling communities and organizations to respond effectively to environmental challenges. The ability of a cultural or institutional narrative to adapt and transform is essential for maintaining social cohesion and relevance,

as it allows shared values and beliefs to adjust to new realities without losing their core essence. This process of adaptation and adjustment in collective narratives is key to community resilience and to the continuity of cultural identity in a globalized and constantly changing context.

In conclusion, narrative plasticity is a fundamental component of human narratives, enabling personal and collective stories to adapt and reorganize in response to experiences and context. From the perspectives of systems theory, social constructionism, and psychological approaches, it is evident that the capacity of narratives to transform and adjust to new circumstances is essential for the well-being and resilience of individuals and communities. Narrative plasticity ensures that people can maintain a coherent and functional identity while integrating new experiences and responding to changes in their environment. In this sense, narrative plasticity is a powerful tool for meaning-making, providing individuals and communities with a flexible framework that organizes experience and facilitates adaptation in a constantly changing world.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 10:

In what ways do individual and collective narratives demonstrate their capacity for adaptation and reconfiguration in response to significant changes in the micro and macro sociocultural context?

11. Narrative frictions and adaptation

The concept of narrative frictions and adaptation arises from the observation of how conflicts and tensions between narratives generate processes of adjustment and transformation in personal and collective stories. Narrative friction, in this context, occurs when the interpretations, beliefs, or values within a specific narrative come into conflict with those of other narratives—whether at the individual, familial, organizational, or cultural level. This tension is not merely a dysfunctional phenomenon; rather, from a systemic and constructionist perspective, it is seen as a mechanism that drives adaptation, allowing narratives to be reconfigured and adjusted to integrate new perspectives and experiences. Friction thus becomes a catalyst for change that facilitates narrative resilience by pushing individuals and communities toward the reorganization of their stories, thereby promoting a process of learning and evolution.

From the perspective of GST, any open system must be capable of adapting to changes and tensions in its environment in order to maintain its functioning (Bertalanffy, 1989). Frictions within a system are not merely obstacles; rather, they are stimuli that drive reorganization and enable the system to respond to new demands (Arnold & Osorio, 1998).

In the narrative context, friction between narratives can be seen as a similar process: tensions that arise between individual and collective narratives generate a state of imbalance that compels individuals and groups to reconsider—and, at times, to restructure—their stories in order to restore coherence. Systems theory suggests that this process of adaptation is fundamental to the system's stability and resilience, as it allows narratives to adjust and remain relevant in changing contexts. Narrative frictions may lead to minor adjustments or significant transformations, depending on the intensity of the tension and the narrative system's capacity to integrate contradictory elements.

Social constructionism offers a complementary perspective by emphasizing that the meanings and values that structure narratives are not fixed, but are in constant construction and negotiation through social interaction. Narrative frictions arise as individuals and communities attempt to integrate different interpretations and meanings into a coherent system. In situations of social change, for example, cultural or generational narratives may come into conflict, generating a friction that requires collective meanings to be reconfigured in order to make sense of new experiences. From this perspective, narrative friction is a process of validation and adjustment in which shared meanings are questioned and renegotiated to adapt to contextual demands. This negotiation process enables narratives to adjust without losing coherence, integrating differences and creating a framework of meaning that reflects current realities.

Social phenomenology helps to understand how frictions between narratives affect individual perception and identity. It posits that individuals interpret their world through socially shared and validated schemas and typifications, which are nevertheless subject to tension when individual experiences do not align with social expectations (Schütz, 1972, 2003; Schütz & Luckmann, 2001). Narrative frictions that arise during these moments of dissonance compel the individual to reinterpret their experiences and reconfigure their personal narrative to integrate the new information. This adjustment process allows the person to maintain a coherent identity and a stable perception of reality, despite contradictions that may emerge within their narrative. In this case, friction is not viewed as a threat, but rather as an opportunity to review and strengthen the personal narrative by integrating new experiences and redefining personal meanings.

In this context, Tharp's Delta Theory of psychosocial change (2012) complements the understanding of narrative frictions by proposing that significant changes in human psychosocial dynamics occur through a gradual process of adaptation driven by constant interaction with the environment. Tharp asserts that change manifests primarily within and through psychosocial systems, which are defined as groupings of people who share common values, goals, and activities. These systems are neither static nor homogeneous; they are in constant flux, oscillating between three critical phases—Beta, Alpha, and Delta—which represent different states of equilibrium or disequilibrium within the social system (Tharp, 2012). When applied to human narrative systems, this framework suggests that frictions between systems act as catalysts for change when tensions between existing narratives and new experiences reach a tipping point, prompting the reevaluation and reorganization of internal narratives. This "Delta" process highlights the importance of flexible adaptation and the ability of individuals and communities to integrate disruptive elements into their narratives, adjusting them without losing their core identity. In this way, frictions not only strengthen narrative resilience but also drive psychosocial evolution by promoting incremental adjustment that allows for the incorporation of broader and more

coherent meanings in response to contextual challenges.

In this sense, narrative friction also functions as a mechanism of integration at the collective level. Tensions between cultural, generational, or ideological narratives promote social adaptation by facilitating dialogue and negotiation among different perspectives. In a diverse society, frictions between narratives can lead to the transformation of collective meanings and the creation of new values and beliefs that reflect the experiences of all members of the community. This process of cultural adaptation not only strengthens social cohesion but also enables the community to respond to external challenges and the demands of a changing environment. In this regard, narrative friction becomes a mechanism of social self-regulation, allowing shared meanings to evolve and remain relevant within a context of diversity and change.

In conclusion, narrative frictions are essential elements in the process of adaptation, both at the individual and collective levels. From the perspectives of systems theory, social constructionism, and phenomenology, it is evident that tensions between narratives generate a state of disequilibrium that drives reorganization and allows narratives to adjust and evolve. This adaptation process facilitates the integration of new experiences and perspectives, enabling narratives to maintain their coherence and relevance in changing contexts. Ultimately, narrative friction serves as a kind of engine of resilience, allowing individuals and communities to remain flexible and adaptive, and promoting a dynamic and evolving understanding of reality.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 11:

How do frictions between personal, organizational, and cultural narrative systems influence the process of adjustment and reconfiguration within a broader system?

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12. Power and narrative hierarchies

The concept of power and of narrative hierarchies emerges from the observation of how structures of control and domination are configured through the creation and perpetuation of narratives that shape both social and individual reality. These hierarchies are established when certain stories or systems of meaning attain a position of supremacy, imposing interpretive frameworks that organize, condition, and restrict the perceptions and actions of individuals and communities. This form of power does not manifest exclusively as a possessive resource, but rather as a subtle and persistent influence that operates through the imposition, validation, and reproduction of dominant narratives, thereby determining which stories are considered legitimate and which are displaced or marginalized.

From an intersectional perspective, these narrative hierarchies not only structure reality but also intersect and articulate with other dimensions of oppression and privilege, such as gender, race, social class, ethnicity, and sexuality (Collins & Bilge, 2019). Each of these dimensions functions as an axis of power that can intensify or mitigate the influence of dominant systems, generating a complex network of subordination and domination in which some identities and experiences are privileged while others are systematically excluded or marginalized (Davis, 2018). This intersectional perspective allows for the understanding that not all individuals experience dominant narratives in the same way: the interactions between different axes of oppression and privilege produce diverse, often unique experiences that cannot be fully explained from a single analytical dimension.

In the same vein, the Foucauldian concept of power-knowledge helps to explain how power operates through the control of narratives and knowledge. According to Foucault, power is exercised not only through coercion but also through the ability to define what is considered "true" or "legitimate" (Foucault, 2003, 2012). Discourses, in this sense, are channels of power that establish the boundaries of what can be thought and said, shaping realities in which certain narratives are imposed as unquestionable truths. This mechanism of structural power implies that dominant narratives, when validated by institutions such as education or the media, become standards that delimit the range of possible interpretations for individuals and collectives, generating a subtle yet profound form of control over identity and behavior.

From Derrida's deconstructivist perspective, the analysis of narrative hierarchies reveals how structures of power are consolidated through binary oppositions within dominant discourses. Derrida argues that these dualities—such as distinctions between "real" and "false," "central" and "marginal"—are not natural categories but rather cultural and linguistic constructions that function to organize and legitimize social reality according to specific power interests (Derrida, 1986). These oppositions, far from being neutral, impose a hierarchical logic in which one term is placed in a superior or more "truthful" position than the other, generating a framework that dictates what is considered valid or legitimate.

By examining narrative hierarchies through the lens of deconstruction, it becomes clear that dominant discourses do not merely describe the world—they actively shape it, structuring which stories and voices are made visible and which are excluded or silenced. In this sense, the power of narrative hierarchies lies in their ability to appear unquestionable, maintaining their hegemony through exclusions and implicit assumptions that are rarely challenged. Deconstruction thus exposes how these hierarchies are perpetuated through a symbolic order that classifies and distributes the value of meanings, consolidating the authority of certain narratives over others. Derrida's approach invites an understanding of how these hierarchies are sustained by the very tensions and contradictions that dominant narratives seek to conceal, thereby revealing the inherent instability of systems that present themselves as absolute or universal.

On the other hand, the concept of hegemonic power, as proposed by Gramsci, offers insight into how dominant narratives succeed in imposing and sustaining themselves through consensus and the general acceptance of the population. Gramsci argues that cultural hegemony constitutes a form of power in which the values and narratives of the dominant classes are presented as universal and natural, to the point that society accepts them without question (Gramsci, 1981a). This sociocultural hegemonic power enables dominant narratives to be reinforced and perpetuated over time, structuring collective reality in a way

that favors the stability of existing power relations.

In this process, civil society institutions—such as the church, schools, media, and cultural organizations—play a central role in disseminating ideas, values, and beliefs that consolidate the position of the dominant class and present the status quo as a natural and inevitable order (Gramsci, 1981b). From this perspective, the acceptance of narrative hierarchies is not merely the result of imposition but rather of a process of consensus in which dominant values are internalized and reproduced by the very individuals who are subordinated to them, thus becoming active agents in the reproduction of cultural hegemony.

In conclusion, power, and narrative hierarchies structure both social and individual reality by establishing interpretive frameworks that delimit individuals' experiences and possibilities for action. Through the lenses of intersectionality, Foucault's power-knowledge framework, Derrida's deconstructivism, and Gramscian hegemony, it can be inferred that dominant narratives not only organize perception and identity but also reinforce power structures by legitimizing certain stories while silencing others within the sociocultural fabric.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 12:

How do hegemonic narratives influence the configuration of social hierarchy, and in what ways can emerging narratives challenge and transform these structures to facilitate social change and mobility within the system of shared meanings?

13. Narrative inertia and hegemonic stability

The concepts of narrative inertia and hegemonic stability emerge from the observation of how dominant narratives succeed in perpetuating and consolidating themselves over time, generating a continuity that allows certain values, beliefs, and power structures to maintain a privileged and stable position. This phenomenon upholds the coherence of shared meanings within society and prevents abrupt changes in the way individuals and communities interpret their reality, thereby promoting sociocultural stability and a collective sense of security. From perspectives such as systems theory, social constructionism, social phenomenology, and psychosocial change theory, it can be inferred that narrative inertia functions as a mechanism that reinforces and reproduces the belief systems structuring social life as a whole, preserving the established order by ensuring the continuity of values and norms that, collectively, sustain and shape the macrosystem in a cohesive and holistic manner.

General Systems Theory offers a fundamental perspective on narrative inertia by describing how complex systems—especially open systems—tend to seek balance and stability (Bertalanffy, 1989; Arnold & Osorio, 1998). In a narrative system, this stability is achieved through repetition and positive feedback, whereby dominant narratives reinforce themselves by structuring the interpretive frameworks through which individuals and communities perceive reality. Narrative inertia arises from the continuous repetition of certain values and beliefs that consolidate the dominant narrative and ensure its persistence. This is accomplished through social structures such as education, religion, the media, and other institutions that reproduce and transmit hegemonic narratives. This self-reinforcing process enables the narrative system to maintain its structure without the need for radical change, thereby promoting the stability of the social system.

Social constructionism complements this understanding by emphasizing that social reality is a construction sustained through the validation and legitimization of certain meanings and values (Berger & Luckmann, 2003; Gergen, 1985, 2007). Narrative inertia occurs when a dominant narrative becomes the interpretive framework individuals use to understand their experiences and to act in the world, establishing an implicit norm that organizes and structures shared knowledge. Hegemonic narratives, by acquiring a normative character, function as filters that determine what is acceptable and legitimate, limiting the diversity of interpretations and promoting uniformity in the perception of reality. This ongoing process of validation ensures that alternative or disruptive narratives remain at the margins, without affecting the coherence and stability of the hegemonic system. In this way, narrative inertia becomes a mechanism of social control that reinforces the power of dominant narratives and maintains the status quo.

From a phenomenological perspective, particularly in Alfred Schütz's theory of intersubjectivity, narrative inertia is understood as an individual tendency to seek consistency and predictability in experience. Schütz argues that people interpret reality through schemas and typifications that are shared and transmitted within the social context, allowing individuals to orient themselves in the world in a predictable and stable manner (Schütz, 1972, 2003; Schütz & Luckmann, 2001). Narrative inertia emerges in this process of typification, in which individual experiences and perceptions are organized according to dominant narratives, creating a framework of meaning that is difficult to challenge or change. Individuals internalize these narrative schemas, and the dominant narrative becomes a referential structure that organizes perception and gives meaning to everyday experiences, generating a form of phenomenological stability that contributes to the coherence of both identity and social reality.

The hegemonic stability promoted by narrative inertia is reflected both in the structure of society and in the way individuals perceive and experience change. This resistance to change is an essential characteristic of hegemonic narratives, which tend to perpetuate themselves by limiting the possibilities for reinterpretation and promoting the continuity of the system of values and beliefs. In this way, dominant narratives operate as a closed framework that blocks the inclusion of alternative perspectives, minimizing frictions and dissonances that could threaten their stability. This phenomenon is especially evident in contexts where social and cultural institutions are structured to protect and perpetuate dominant narratives, ensuring a stability that primarily benefits groups in power, although it may also serve the broader collective by providing a sense of security and predictability—particularly relevant in large demographic contexts that rely on such resources to foster

community development.

However, although narrative inertia contributes to social stability, it also limits the system's capacity for adaptation and change. Hegemonic narratives become rigid over time, and their resistance to incorporating new experiences and perspectives creates a risk of dissonance when environmental demands exceed the dominant narrative's ability to adapt. In times of social crisis or cultural change, narrative inertia may be challenged by alternative or emerging narratives that introduce new interpretations and meanings, promoting a transformation in the system of values and beliefs that structures social reality. This process of confrontation between hegemonic and alternative narratives can lead to a reconfiguration of the narrative system, in which stability is redefined in response to new contextual realities and demands.

According to Roland Tharp (2012), the stability of systems is reinforced by an inherent tendency toward homeostasis or resistance to change. This stability, which can be understood as a form of *psychosocial inertia*, operates within what the author refers to as the "Beta phase" of psychosocial systems. In this phase, the system maintains a state of behavioral equilibrium and stability, similar to what occurs with narrative inertia in hegemonic systems, where structures of meaning and power perpetuate themselves by resisting external forces of change. Tharp argues that this tendency toward homeostasis limits the flexibility of systems to adapt to new contexts and realities, unless significant forces intervene to disrupt such inertia (Tharp, 2012). As with the hegemonic stability of dominant narratives, this Beta phase ensures the continuity of the system's internal relationships and structures, reinforcing a psychosocial framework that is unlikely to change without strong and sustained external influence.

In conclusion, narrative inertia and hegemonic stability are mechanisms that enable the continuity and coherence of social and cultural systems by maintaining the dominant narrative in a position of control that organizes and constrains interpretations of reality. From the perspectives of systems theory, social constructionism, social phenomenology, and Tharp's psychosocial theory of change, it is evident that this hegemonic stability is achieved through the repetition, validation, and legitimization of shared meanings and values, which function as normative frames of reference. Although narrative inertia promotes social cohesion and stability, it also limits the system's adaptive capacity, generating a tension between continuity and change. In times of crisis or social transformation, hegemonic stability may be challenged, and narrative inertia may give way to a process of reorganization that allows narratives to evolve in order to reflect new environmental realities.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 13:

How do hegemonic narratives, within the sociocultural context, develop resistance to change that enables them to endure over time?

14. The meme as a narrative vehicle for cultural influence

The idea of the meme as a narrative vehicle for cultural influence is primarily inferred from its capacity as a sociocultural communicative element to serve as a carrier of shared meanings and as a unit of cultural transmission. Memes are not merely humorous elements or pieces of digital content; from a theoretical perspective, they represent transmitters of ideas and structures of thought that influence the construction of meanings and values within society. By functioning as narrative vehicles, memes become integrated into communication systems that enable the circulation and adaptation of narratives across various cultural, political, and social contexts, facilitating the understanding and assimilation of shared themes and messages.

From a systemic perspective, memes can be understood as a kind of information node within a complex system of social and cultural interactions. Memes participate in a feedback process in which, through repetition, variation, and transformation, they respond to reactions and changes in their environment. In this sense, memes operate within a cycle of continuous exchange with their audiences and the social context, adapting and evolving to remain relevant or to gain meaning (Aunger, 2002). This process of selection and adaptation, through these units of cultural meaning transmission, allows certain narrative elements to persist in culture while others disappear or are modified, generating a dynamic of narrative selection in which memes become catalysts for change and adaptation.

From the perspective of social constructionism, memes can be understood as products of negotiated meanings that are neither absolute nor fixed, but rather collectively constructed through interaction (Gergen, 2007; Berger & Luckmann, 2003). This approach suggests that memes function as condensed narrative constructions that encapsulate themes, emotions, and values in an accessible and reproducible form. Through social interaction and reinterpretation, memes adapt to various contexts and audiences, facilitating the diffusion and recontextualization of the meanings they convey. Thus, memes act as tools for the construction of collective narratives that reflect and shape social perceptions of issues, enabling the transmission of meanings that resonate with the groups that adopt them.

Social phenomenology offers a perspective centered on subjective experience and on how memes, as narrative units, would connect with people's everyday lives. By providing an accessible narrative structure, memes enable an immediate connection with social and cultural themes, offering an interpretive framework for common experiences and making the complexity of collective issues more comprehensible. This condensed structure facilitates the adoption, integration, and replication of the meanings contained within the meme, turning them into entry points for understanding complex topics. Thus, from a social phenomenological perspective, it can be inferred that memes are not merely vehicles of information, but symbolic experiences that structure perception and social identity.

From the memetic theoretical approach proper, memes are understood as cultural units that replicate, adapt, and evolve in a manner analogous to genes in the biological realm. This approach, originally developed by Richard Dawkins (1993), emphasizes that memes are transmitted from mind to mind through imitation, communication, and repetition. Memes survive and spread if they succeed in capturing attention and resonating emotionally with individuals; those that fail in this regard tend to disappear. This process of "memetic selection" ensures that the memes that persist in the cultural environment are

those that reflect and reinforce the prevailing ideas and values of society (Blackmore, 2000; Lynch, 1996; Aunger, 2002; Distin, 2005).

The evolutionary nature of memes allows them to adapt to new contexts and to combine with other memes, forming "memeplexes"—or clusters of cohesive memes—that operate together to ensure their replication. These memeplexes are particularly effective in constructing powerful narratives, such as ideologies or belief systems, as they achieve significant cultural cohesion and penetration (Blackmore, 2000). Thus, the memetic approach suggests that memes, by competing and adapting to the environments in which they circulate, actively contribute to the creation and transformation of shared cultural meanings—a phenomenon that is currently intensified by the development of digital communications, which amplify and accelerate their diffusion and, consequently, substantially enhance their modeling effectiveness (Kien, 2019).

Considering these elements, from the memetic perspective, certain types of narrative systems can be interpreted as operating like memes or, in some cases, as complex co-adapted memes (memeplexes), which function as cultural narrative vehicles capable of generating mobility and change within the social network of shared meanings, moving from the individual to the collective and vice versa. In this sense, such narrative systems are not merely sets of ideas or stories that hold meaning for a particular group or community; rather, they act as interconnected networks of memes that, through their interaction, strengthen and enhance their capacity to persist, adapt, and promote cultural change.

These narrative memetic systems can be compared to living systems, such as the human lymphatic system (in its immunological function), in which each meme (lymph node) performs a cultural function of transporting high-impact evolutionary information through a mediating network of cultural beliefs within the broader narrative macrosystem (the human body). This process primarily ensures cultural dynamism and the shaping of structures that constitute ever-changing social contexts (analogous to the body's immune response to external threats). In this way, these types of memes or memeplexes drive the evolution of narrative systems in response to contextual shifts and audience dynamics, selecting, modifying, or discarding information that fails to resonate, adapt, or—most importantly—generate change within culture. This approach enables an understanding of how certain narratives achieve cultural predominance by combining effective memes that, when integrated into memeplexes, reinforce the persistence and resonance of the narrative system over time.

In conclusion, memes, as narrative vehicles, play a fundamental role in the transmission and transformation of meanings within culture. From various theoretical perspectives—systemic, constructionism, phenomenological, and memetic—memes emerge as dynamic elements that facilitate the creation and adaptation of collective narratives, enabling constant interaction between the individual and their social environment. By operating within complex networks and through processes of selection and adaptation, memes and memeplexes not only reflect shared ideas but also act as agents of cultural change, capable of shaping and redefining social reality. The continuous evolution of these narrative systems allows cultural narratives to remain current and relevant within ever-changing contexts, thereby exerting a profound influence on the perception and construction of collective identity.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 14:

In what ways can memes function as transmission channels that enable narrative systems to move across and integrate within different ecosystemic levels, facilitating interaction and the creation of new narrative systems within a complex social environment?

15. Narrative diversity and social cohesion

The concepts of narrative diversity and social cohesion are drawn from the observable dynamic relationship between the multiplicity of narratives present within a society and its ability to maintain a stable and functional social structure. Narrative diversity, understood as the coexistence of multiple stories, interpretations, and perspectives within a community, not only enriches a society's cultural heritage but also strengthens social cohesion by facilitating greater understanding and adaptation to human complexity. From the perspectives of social constructionism, GST, and phenomenology, narrative diversity enables individuals and groups to recognize and understand one another, fostering an inclusive and adaptive social structure that, rather than dividing, promotes a sense of belonging and unity.

Social constructionism emphasizes that social reality is neither an objective nor a fixed entity, but rather a collective construction that emerges from interaction and the exchange of meanings (Berger & Luckmann, 2003). In this context, narrative diversity functions as a driving force for cultural and social enrichment, by enabling individuals and communities to share their unique experiences and perspectives. Through this process of exchange, shared meanings are generated that integrate diverse voices and create an inclusive frame of reference that reflects the complexity of life in society. This multiplicity of narratives not only allows individuals to feel recognized and represented, but also provides a solid foundation for social cohesion by fostering a sense of belonging and legitimacy for all members of the community, regardless of their backgrounds and experiences.

Systems theory contributes to the understanding of the relationship between narrative diversity and social cohesion by proposing that complex systems, such as human communities, benefit from variety and adaptability (Arnold & Osorio, 1998). In a social system, narrative diversity introduces flexibility and responsiveness to environmental changes and challenges by allowing multiple perspectives and solutions to coexist and complement one another (Parsons, 1966; Luhmann, 1998). Social cohesion is not achieved through uniformity, but through the integration of differences, which enriches the system

and enables it to adapt and evolve according to changing needs. This inclusive and multifaceted structure allows the social system to self-regulate and respond effectively to challenges, maintaining a balance between stability and change. Systems theory suggests that social cohesion is strengthened when the system can integrate narrative diversity, as this enables a structure in which all members can find their place and contribute their perspective, fostering adaptive stability.

From the phenomenological perspective, narrative diversity can be understood as an important tool that facilitates an intersubjective experience, allowing individuals to understand reality from multiple angles. Phenomenology holds that people experience and perceive the world uniquely, based on their personal experiences and cultural context (Moran, 2000; Finlay, 2009). In this sense, narrative diversity acts as a bridge that connects individual experiences, enabling people to recognize themselves in the stories and perspectives of others. This process of mutual recognition strengthens the sense of community and belonging, as individuals see their own experiences reflected in the collective narrative and develop an empathetic understanding of others' realities. Phenomenology suggests that, through this integration of perspectives, narrative diversity contributes to a form of social cohesion rooted in empathy and mutual recognition, fostering a shared reality in which all members find meaning and significance.

Narrative diversity also contributes to social cohesion in terms of resilience and adaptability. In times of change or crisis, a community that embraces and values multiple narratives is better equipped to generate innovative solutions and responses by integrating different ways of seeing and understanding reality. A society's ability to maintain cohesion in challenging contexts depends on its capacity to adapt its collective narrative in response to new circumstances. Narrative diversity allows meaning systems to be renewed and adjusted by incorporating new voices and perspectives that provide interpretive richness and enable greater flexibility in the face of change. Thus, social cohesion is strengthened not through the rigidity of a single narrative, but through the flexibility that enables communities to evolve and respond to environmental demands while maintaining a coherent and adaptive identity.

In conclusion, narrative diversity is a fundamental component of social cohesion, as it allows multiple voices and perspectives to be integrated into a collective narrative that reflects the complexity and richness of life in society. From the perspectives of social constructionism, systems theory, and phenomenology, social cohesion is strengthened when narrative diversity is valued and promoted, as it enables an adaptive and inclusive structure that responds to the needs and experiences of all members of the community. A society's ability to maintain cohesion depends on its capacity to integrate and celebrate differences, generating a shared narrative that allows all its members to find meaning, belonging, and legitimacy within the social system. In this sense, narrative diversity is not an obstacle to cohesion, but rather a source of resilience and strength that enables communities to respond to challenges and remain united in a context of continuous change.

In this context, the following exploratory question is posed:

Abductive question 15:

In what ways do the inclusion and diversity of narratives within a society contribute to social cohesion and to the capacity for adaptation in the face of sociocultural change?

FORMULATION OF THEORETICAL HYPOTHESES

In the methodological construction of the TCCR, abductive reasoning has played a fundamental role by generating inferential questions aimed at formulating hypotheses capable of explaining the complex dynamics of human narratives across various psychosocial contexts. This approach has facilitated the creation of postulates that seek to address phenomena that have not been fully explained—or have been addressed only in a fragmented manner—by previous theories. These hypotheses form the core of the TCCR by offering new perspectives on the interrelation between individual, family, organizational, and cultural narratives, as well as their impact on psychosocial structures, human behavior, and the very notion of "society."

As noted in the specialized literature, the formulation of hypotheses through abductive reasoning begins with the identification of a surprising or unexplained phenomenon, which prompts the articulation of questions that express the underlying problems. Subsequently, hypotheses are developed which, if correct, could explain the phenomenon in question. These hypotheses are evaluated based on their plausibility rather than certainty, and their validity is continuously reviewed as new investigative information emerges. This abductive process—characterized by its dynamism and flexibility—allows for the adjustment of hypotheses as needed and precedes their validation through deductive and inductive methods. This ensures a deeper and more coherent exploration of the theory (Magnani & Bertolotti, 2017).

The following are the abductive hypotheses that served as the foundation for the construction of the TCCR, constituting the analytical basis upon which this theoretical proposal is developed:

Hypothesis No. 1: Existence of an ecosystemic relational narrative suprasystem

Abductive question No. 1:

> How do individual and collective narratives interact and become reconfigured within a broader systemic context?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed, as a foundational premise of the theory, that human narratives do not operate in isolation, but rather form part of a broader suprasystem that extends from the individual to the collective level. This suprasystem, referred to as the "Cognosystem" (due to its psychosocial characteristics), must be understood as a global and dynamic entity, constantly undergoing internal processes of adaptation and evolution,

in which psychosocial narratives are continuously reconfigured and transformed in response to ecosystemic interactions.

Hypothesis No. 1:

> Human narratives coexist within a global suprasystem, referred to as the "Cognosystem," where they interact and are continuously reconfigured in response to crises and transformations within its internal structure. This process of interaction enables the evolution and adaptation of human narratives—both individual and collective—within this suprasystem, thereby ensuring their relevance and coherence in the face of contextual systemic changes in the environment.

Hypothesis No. 2: Society as a cognosystemic relational narrative construction

Abductive question No. 2:

> How do narrative constructs and social structures intertwine to form and sustain the shared perception of "society" as an intersubjective reality in constant adaptation?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that "society" is not a fixed or objective entity, but rather a complex construction formed by collective narratives that individuals accept—consciously or unconsciously—as a shared reality. These narratives, organized within a broader system known as the Cognosystem, provide structure and meaning to communal life, functioning as the foundation of a sociocultural-type contract. The flexibility and reconfigurability of these narrative constructs allow society to continuously adapt to environmental changes and challenges, maintaining cohesion and functionality through a dynamic balance between the established and the emerging.

Hypothesis No. 2:

> What is commonly understood as "society" is, in fact, a vast and dynamic network of interactive and plural cognosystemic narrative constructs, collectively accepted—either consciously or unconsciously—as "reality" within the framework of a functional sociocultural contract. These constructs, which constitute an intersubjective reality in constant transformation, are organized within the Cognosystem, making communal life among human beings possible. The narratives that make up this network are flexible, reconfigurable, and deeply interconnected, allowing them to continuously adapt and sustain social cohesion in the face of environmental changes and challenges.

Hypothesis No. 3: Human narrative as an open system

Abductive question No. 3:

> How is a human narrative structured as an open and organized system that not only communicates information but also shapes the perception of "reality"?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that the entity referred to as the "human narrative" is not merely an isolated story or a linguistic element that passively transmits inert information, but rather open and self-regulating systems that structure how individuals perceive reality, organizing actions and experiences. Within the context of the Cognosystem, these narratives adapt and evolve through continuous feedback, integrating external information and responding to environmental changes. Rather than simply conveying information, narratives actively contribute to the construction of meaning, providing a flexible and adaptable framework through which individuals and groups understand and interpret their reality.

Hypothesis No. 3:

> Human narratives operate as open, organized, and self-regulating systems, whose interrelated elements structure and organize the perception of "reality," as well as human actions and experiences. These narratives function within the framework of the Cognosystem, engaging in a constant process of feedback and evolution that integrates external information and responds to environmental changes. In this way, the narrative not only transmits information but actively participates in the construction of meaning, providing a flexible and adaptable framework through which individuals and groups interpret and make sense of their reality.

Hypothesis No. 4: Life cycle of narrative systems

Abductive question No. 4:

> What internal and external dynamics and conditions influence the development of the life cycle of human narrative systems?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that human narratives evolve following a life cycle that includes phases of emergence, development, maturity, decline or transformation, and renewal. This process is influenced by internal factors—such as emotions and resilience—

and by external conditions—such as cultural and social context. Continuous feedback dynamics enable narratives to adapt and evolve in response to both internal and external changes, thereby maintaining their relevance and functionality within the Cognosystem over time.

Hypothesis No. 4:

> Human narratives evolve through a life cycle composed of the phases of emergence, development, maturity, decline or transformation, and renewal—shaped by both internal factors (such as emotions, experiences, and resilience) and external conditions (including cultural, social, and political contexts). These dynamics enable narratives to adapt and evolve in response to both their internal processes and contextual changes, continuously adjusting through feedback in order to maintain their relevance and functionality within the Cognosystem over time.

Hypothesis No. 5: Emotional-narrative feedback

Abductive question No. 5:

> How does the feedback between emotions and narratives manifest, and in what ways does this interaction affect the stability and evolution of narratives across different psychosocial contexts?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that emotions and narratives maintain a constant feedback relationship: emotions reinforce the stability and coherence of narratives, while narratives shape the emotions experienced by individuals. This dynamic interaction within the Cognosystem influences the evolution of narratives, either enhancing their stability or driving their transformation, depending on the psychosocial contexts in which they unfold. Thus, emotions not only affect how narratives are sustained but also facilitate change when circumstances require it.

Hypothesis No. 5:

> Emotions and narratives mutually influence one another through a continuous feedback process: emotions reinforce the structure and stability of narratives, while narratives shape the emotions individuals experience. This constant interaction within the Cognosystem affects the evolution of narratives, either enhancing their stability or triggering their transformation, depending on the psychosocial contexts surrounding individuals.

Hypothesis No. 6: Emotions as agents of narrative change

Abductive question No. 6:

> How do emotions, especially in times of crisis, act as drivers for the modification of narratives and the construction of new interpretations of reality?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that human emotions play a crucial role in the formation, stability, and transformation of narratives. During times of crisis or significant change, emotions act as catalysts that drive the transformation of human narratives. These emotions enable the destabilization of previous narratives, generating the necessary momentum for them to be reconfigured and for new experiences and realities to be integrated. Through this process, emotions facilitate the adaptation of the Cognosystem, allowing for the construction of new interpretations of reality that are coherent and functional within the current context.

Hypothesis No. 6:

> Human emotions—especially during crises or moments of significant change—act as catalysts that promote the modification of the narratives of both individuals and the social groups to which they belong. These emotions generate the necessary momentum to destabilize prior narratives, allowing them to be reconfigured in a homeostatic manner by integrating new experiences and realities. In this way, emotions facilitate the adaptation of the Cognosystem, enabling the construction of new interpretations of reality that are coherent with the current context.

Hypothesis No. 7: Narrative autopoiesis

Abductive question No. 7:

> In what ways does autopoiesis allow narratives to self-organize, maintain their coherence autonomously, and at the same time facilitate their interrelation with other narratives in the environment?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that the narrative systems within the Cognosystem are autopoietic by nature, which enables them to self-organize and maintain their coherence through internal self-reproduction processes, without relying on external stimuli. This ensures their stability and continuity, allowing narratives to evolve autonomously. At the same time, autopoiesis facilitates interrelation with other surrounding narratives, integrating new influences and generating cybernetic feedback that contributes to the cohesion and dynamism of the Cognosystem. In this way, narratives remain stable while also remaining open to significant contextual change.

Hypothesis No. 7:

> Autopoiesis allows narratives to self-organize through processes of internal self-reproduction and maintenance, ensuring their coherence without relying on constant external stimuli. This autopoietic capacity enables narratives to adapt and evolve from within their own components, maintaining a relative stability that ensures their continuity. At the same time, autopoiesis facilitates interrelation with other narratives in the environment by allowing the integration of new elements and contextual influences, generating cybernetic feedback processes that strengthen the cohesion and dynamism of the Cognosystem.

Hypothesis No. 8: Multilevel structure within the cognosystem

Abductive question No. 8:

> In what ways are individual, organizational, and cultural narratives organized and mutually reinforced within a multilevel sociocultural system?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that within the Cognosystem, individual, organizational, and cultural narratives are organized into a multilevel and interconnected system. These narratives communicate and mutually influence one another through upward feedback processes (from the individual to the collective), downward feedback (from the collective to the individual), and horizontal feedback (among narratives at the same level). This dynamic facilitates the coevolution and continuous adaptation of narratives across all levels, enabling them to respond flexibly to changes and challenges in the sociocultural environment.

Hypothesis No. 8:

> Within the Cognosystem, individual, organizational, and cultural narratives are organized and operate as a large-scale, multilevel sociocultural system in which these levels—or ecosystemic layers—interact and influence one another through upward, downward, and horizontal feedback processes. This multilevel dynamic allows individual narratives to influence organizational and cultural levels, and vice versa, facilitating the coevolution and adaptation of all narratives in response to contextual changes and challenges.

Hypothesis No. 9: Interconnectivity and narrative feedback

Abductive question No. 9:

> In what ways do human narrative systems interact and feed back across different psychosocial levels, facilitating their continuous adaptation and mutual reconfiguration?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that human narrative systems interact and engage in feedback processes across the various psychosocial levels of the Cognosystem through cybernetic mechanisms: upward (from the individual to the collective), downward (from the collective to the individual), and horizontal (among narratives at the same level). This multilevel interaction enables narratives to continuously adapt and reconfigure in response to new experiences and contextual challenges, ensuring their coherence, evolution, and relevance within the Cognosystem.

Hypothesis No. 9:

> Human narrative systems, across the various psychosocial levels of the Cognosystem, interact and engage in feedback through cybernetic processes of upward, downward, and horizontal communication. This multilevel interaction facilitates the continuous adaptation and reconfiguration of narratives, allowing them to adjust to new experiences and contextual challenges, while ensuring their coherence and evolution within the Cognosystem.

Hypothesis No. 10: Narrative plasticity

Abductive question No. 10:

> In what ways do individual and collective narratives demonstrate their capacity for adaptation and reconfiguration in response to significant changes in the micro and macro sociocultural context?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that individual and collective narratives are reconfigured in response to significant changes in both micro and macro sociocultural contexts. At the micro level, individual narratives adapt to new experiences and personal crises. At the macro level, collective narratives—such as cultural ones—are restructured through processes of social negotiation in order to respond to broader changes. This adaptive capacity ensures the coherence and relevance of narratives in the face of transformations within the sociocultural environment.

Hypothesis No. 10:

> Individual and collective narratives are dynamically reconfigured in response to significant changes in both micro and macro sociocultural contexts. At the micro level, individual narratives adapt to new experiences and personal crises, while at the macro level, collective narratives are restructured through processes of social negotiation. This adaptive capacity ensures the ongoing coherence and relevance of narratives within the sociocultural environment in which they unfold.

Hypothesis No. 11: Narrative frictions and cognosystemic adaptation

Abductive question No. 11:

> How do frictions between personal, organizational, and cultural narrative systems influence the process of adjustment and reconfiguration within a broader system?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that frictions between personal, organizational, and cultural narrative systems within the Cognosystem generate tensions, crises, and conflicts that drive adjustments and reconfigurations across multiple levels. These processes of accommodation enable narratives to adapt and evolve in order to restore balance and facilitate harmonious coexistence within the broader system. In this way, conflict becomes a driver of change that promotes the dynamic stability of the Cognosystem, ensuring its capacity to respond and adjust to new challenges in the environment.

Hypothesis No. 11:

> Frictions between personal, organizational, and cultural narrative systems within the Cognosystem generate tensions, crises, and conflicts that ultimately trigger multilevel adjustments and reconfigurations. These processes of accommodation—prompted by crisis and conflict—allow narratives to adapt and evolve in order to restore balance and facilitate harmonious coexistence within the broader system, thereby promoting the dynamic stability of the Cognosystem.

Hypothesis No. 12: Power and narrative hierarchies

Abductive question No. 12:

> How do hegemonic narratives influence the configuration of social hierarchy, and in what ways can emerging narratives challenge and transform these structures to facilitate social change and mobility within the system of shared meanings?

Hypothesis description: It is first proposed that hierarchically dominant or hegemonic narratives exist within the suprasystem, or Cognosystem. These narratives serve as key components in the structuring of the "social hierarchy" by defining meaning frameworks that uphold the status quo and legitimize existing structures. However, emerging narratives—by challenging dominant beliefs—can reconfigure these hierarchies, facilitating change and mobility within the system of shared meanings. This process of confrontation and adaptation enables the social structure to evolve and adjust in response to new experiences and contextual challenges, thus promoting social transformation.

Hypothesis No. 12:

> Hegemonic narratives within the Cognosystem structure the "social hierarchy" by defining meaning frameworks that sustain the status quo and legitimize existing social structures. Emerging narratives, by challenging these dominant beliefs, promote a reconfiguration of established hierarchies, facilitating social change and mobility within the system of shared meanings. This process enables the evolution and adaptation of the social structure in response to new experiences and contextual challenges.

Hypothesis No. 13: Narrative inertia and hegemonic stability

Abductive question No. 13:

> How do hegemonic narratives, within the sociocultural context, develop resistance to change that enables them to endure over time?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that hegemonic narratives develop resistance to change through processes of institutionalization and legitimization that create a form of "narrative inertia." This inertia enables their integration into cultural, legal, and educational structures, reinforcing their stability and continuity. Constant repetition and widespread acceptance consolidate their dominant position, while mechanisms of power discredit or constrain emerging narratives. These factors ensure that hegemonic narratives endure over time, despite emerging challenges and tensions.

Hypothesis No. 13:

> Hegemonic narratives within the Cognosystem develop resistance to change through processes of institutionalization and legitimization that create a form of "narrative inertia." This inertia allows them to become embedded in cultural, legal, and educational structures, ensuring their stability and continuity despite emerging narrative tensions or challenges. Repetition and widespread acceptance, along with power mechanisms that constrain alternative narratives, contribute to the enduring presence of these hegemonic narratives over time.

Hypothesis No. 14: The meme as a narrative vehicle of cultural influence

Abductive question No. 14:

> In what ways can memes function as transmission channels that enable narrative systems to move across and integrate within different ecosystemic levels, facilitating interaction and the creation of new narrative systems within a complex social environment?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that narrative systems not only transform and adapt internally, but are also transmitted through narrative channels—comparable to transport vehicles—within the Cognosystem. These channels, referred to as *"cognosystemic memes,"* allow narrative systems to influence or integrate into other narratives, generating new narrative systems across different levels of the suprasystem. Cognosystemic memes act as units

of meaning transmission, facilitating interaction and coevolution among narrative systems.

Hypothesis No. 14:

> Narrative systems, in addition to transforming and adapting internally, propagate through specific channels within the Cognosystem, referred to as "cognosystemic memes." These memes function as communicative transport vehicles, enabling these units of meaning to influence or integrate with others, giving rise to the creation of new narrative systems across the various levels of the suprasystem. Therefore, cognosystemic memes act as essential units of meaning transmission, facilitating the interaction and coevolution of human narratives.

Hypothesis No. 15: Narrative diversity and social cohesion

Abductive question No. 15:

> In what ways do the inclusion and diversity of narratives within a society contribute to social cohesion and to the capacity for adaptation in the face of sociocultural change?

Hypothesis description: It is proposed that the inclusion and diversity of narratives within the Cognosystem are fundamental for maintaining social cohesion. By allowing the coexistence of multiple perspectives, mutual understanding is fostered and conflict is reduced, promoting social stability. Moreover, narrative diversity strengthens the system's adaptive capacity by integrating new meanings and responding flexibly to sociocultural changes. This ensures that the Cognosystem can evolve and remain cohesive in a dynamic and ever-changing environment.

Hypothesis No. 15:

> The inclusion and diversity of narratives within the Cognosystem are fundamental to social cohesion, as they allow for the coexistence of diverse perspectives and foster mutual understanding among members of society. This narrative diversity facilitates the Cognosystem's adaptation to sociocultural changes by integrating new meanings and promoting the system's flexibility in the face of emerging challenges, thereby ensuring its stability and cohesion in a dynamic environment.

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5. THE COGNOSYSTEMIC THEORY OF RELATIONAL CONSTRUCTION (TCCR)

Introduction to the TCCR

NARRATIVE SYSTEMS, conceived as a kind of "stem cell" for the construction of human meaning, represent a phenomenon of remarkable complexity and profound fascination. Their impact, though constant, often goes unnoticed in the inertia of everyday life, where critical reflection on their influence within individuals' psychosocial experience remains limited. However, one clear way to observe this dynamic is by examining the role played by contemporary audiovisual media. Industries such as film, television, and music function not only as sources of entertainment, but also as architects of perceived realities, shaping shared meanings within the intersubjective sociocultural space. Through these narrative vehicles, it becomes evident how collective constructions transcend the individual, transforming perceptions of the world and modes of social interaction.

The influence of media and audiovisual narratives on the construction of sociocultural meaning lies in their ability to shape perceived reality, functioning as reference structures for individuals and communities. From cinema to social media, mass communication and audiovisual entertainment offer narratives that not only represent the world but also structure how people understand it—and their place within it. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the way fictional narrative universes, such as those presented in popular sagas like *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *The Lord of the Rings*, or more recently, the *Marvel Cinematic Universe* (MCU), among many others, acquire deep significance among their followers, becoming narrative frameworks that transcend their fictional origins to integrate into

the lived reality of their fans.

From a sociocultural perspective, media narratives are not neutral; they operate within systems of power and meaning that legitimize ideologies and social structures. Stuart Hall, in his work *Representation* (2003), emphasizes that the media act as producers of meaning by encoding and decoding messages that both reflect and construct sociocultural reality. In this sense, audiovisual narratives function as discursive tools that, through symbols, images, and stories, generate cultural consensus—or, in some cases, challenge the status quo. For example, in the context of political propaganda, Hall illustrates how meanings are not inherent to messages, but rather constructed through cultural and discursive processes, wherein media images can both reinforce and question dominant ideologies (Hall, 2003).

In the realm of entertainment, Matt Hills, in his work *Fan cultures* (2005), analyzes the phenomenon of fandom, emphasizing how fans transform audiovisual works into frameworks of meaning that inform their identities and practices. The author notes that universes like *Star Trek* not only provide entertainment, but also serve as platforms for the exploration of human values, identities, and aspirations. Hills describes how fans reinterpret and adapt these narratives to their own contexts, creating communities of shared meaning that operate as microcosms of cultural experimentation (Hills, 2005). In this process, fictional narratives acquire an almost mythical dimension, functioning as tools for self-exploration and the collective construction of meaning.

Likewise, Henry Jenkins, in his work *Fans, blogueros y videojuegos* (2009) [Fans, bloggers, and video games], highlights how new media have amplified this dynamic, allowing fans to interact with, reinterpret, and actively expand media texts. Digital platforms and social networks have become spaces for the co-creation of meaning, where fictional narratives blend with personal and sociocultural experiences, blurring the lines between fiction and reality. Jenkins illustrates how these participatory practices foster a kind of collective intelligence, in which individuals collaborate to reinterpret and reframe media texts in ways that reflect their own experiences and aspirations (Jenkins, 2009).

The relationship between narrative and the perception of reality is also evident in the impact of "cult cultures" associated with certain media productions. According to Hills, the cult status of sagas such as *Star Wars* or *The Lord of the Rings* lies in their ability to establish deep emotional connections with their audiences, who see in these stories not merely entertainment, but frameworks for understanding ethical dilemmas, social dynamics, and the human condition (Hills, 2005). These narratives become "modern mythologies" that shape individuals' understanding of concepts such as heroism, justice, and sacrifice.

Douglas Kellner, in his work *Media culture* (2003), complements this view by arguing that media narratives serve as vehicles not only for cultural hegemony but also for resistance. Films and television programs, by representing particular worldviews, tend to naturalize specific values and ideologies. However, these same narratives can also be reinterpreted by audiences in ways that subvert their original intent. This dual movement of legitimation and resistance demonstrates how audiovisual narratives function as symbolic arenas where meanings are negotiated and new realities are constructed.

In this context, the ability of audiovisual narratives to influence the perception of reality and both individual and collective beliefs is not limited to the explicit content of media texts, but also encompasses the social and cultural practices that emerge around

them. As Hills suggests, fans are not passive consumers, but active agents who reconfigure narratives to make them meaningful in their own lives (Hills, 2005). This process transforms fictional narratives into lenses through which individuals interpret the world, integrating fictional elements into their personal and collective frames of reference.

But how powerful can the influence of media narratives truly be in everyday social life? The answer is very powerful—and in some cases, alarmingly so. There are numerous examples where large groups of fans have crossed the line between fiction and reality, acting in concrete and even hostile ways toward actors or public figures due to the fictional storylines they consume. These actions, often driven by a distorted sense of justice tied to unreal narratives, become a serious issue that affects both those directly involved and the broader social perception.

A recent emblematic example is the case of Franco-British actor Fabien Frankel, known for portraying "Criston Cole" in *House of the Dragon* (from HBO's *Game of Thrones* universe). Frankel has been the target of constant harassment, insults, and abuse on social media from fans who, in an almost obsessive manner, confuse him with his fictional character. Comments such as "I hate you," "Where were you when they killed the heir to the throne," "How could you go from being the most beloved character to the worst in the history of Game of Thrones," and "I hope someone beats this guy up" (Solà, 2024, June 26), are just a few of the thousands of messages he receives daily. This situation led him to temporarily shut down his social media accounts and limit public appearances out of fear of being attacked.

Frankel is not an isolated case; this type of behavior has been repeated with other actors and public figures, highlighting the concerning impact that fictional narratives can have on real-life situations.

Ultimately, audiovisual narratives—ranging from political propaganda to cult fictional universes—are dynamic forces that shape perceived reality and the sociocultural meanings of human beings. These narratives do not merely represent reality; they actively construct it by offering symbolic frameworks through which individuals and communities make sense of their environment and themselves. The ability of fans to adopt and transform these narratives illustrates the power of media as cultural agents and demonstrates how the interaction between story, audience, and context gives rise to new ways of understanding and inhabiting reality.

Along these lines, although with an even broader and deeper analytical approach to the effect of narrative systems on human beings, an episode that took place in 2023 stands out: during an interview in Spain with the renowned Israeli historian and writer Yuval Noah Harari, as part of the *BBVA Aprendemos Juntos 2030* program on the YouTube platform. On that occasion, a young girl from the audience posed a particularly intriguing question to the distinguished intellectual, asking him the following:

"What superpower did the sapiens acquire that allowed them to rule today's planet?"

In response to this sociological question, Harari (2023) replied:

> …If we look at ourselves on an individual level, we are not particularly strong or powerful animals. Elephants are bigger and stronger, cheetahs are faster, snakes are venomous, and eagles can fly. […] What makes us the most powerful animal in the world is that we can cooperate in large groups and constantly change the way we cooperate. The great achievements of history were due to our incredible ability to cooperate. Think about humans landing on the Moon […] building a spacecraft and getting to the Moon requires millions of people to cooperate…
>
> Why can we cooperate with strangers and with people from distant places? Because people invent stories. As long as we all believe in the same story, we don't need to know each other in order to cooperate. For example, a sport like football is based on a story. You go to a field, see people you've never seen before, and within five minutes you're playing together, because everyone knows the same story about football…
>
> The same goes for money. It might sound strange to say that money is a story, but what exactly is it? […] In most cases, it's not even something tangible: over ninety percent of the money that exists in the world is not paper; it's just electronic information flowing between computers. […] Yet it works because there's a story about money, and almost everyone believes in it. Not everyone believes in God, not everyone believes in Santa Claus, but almost everyone believes in money—and it's nothing more than a story…
>
> Sometimes people stop believing in it, and then we have a big problem. Most of the time, we all believe the story, and as long as we do, it works. That's what makes us more powerful than elephants, than lions, than chimpanzees—than anyone. We can cooperate with millions, even billions of people to build cities, spaceships, roads, grow food, and whatever else is needed—because we believe in all these stories.

Yuval Noah Harari, in reflecting on the history of humankind, highlights a crucial aspect for understanding the success of the human species: the power of narrative systems. In his analysis, Harari explains that human beings, unlike other species, are not distinguished by physical strength or specific abilities, but rather by their unique capacity to cooperate on a large scale, guided by shared stories. This massive cooperation—which has enabled the construction of civilizations, technological development, and the creation of complex economic systems—is rooted in the human ability to generate and share narratives that transcend individual experience. Stories function as symbolic bonds that connect millions of people, making it possible to collaborate toward common goals without the need to know one another personally.

The power of human narrative systems lies in their ability to structure and give meaning to social reality. Through them, shared meanings are constructed that guide behavior, establish norms and values, and define what is considered acceptable or unacceptable within a specific society. Harari uses examples such as money and football to illustrate how shared narratives allow individuals to cooperate efficiently. Money, for instance, has no intrinsic value; its worth derives from the collective consensus that upholds the story behind it. Similarly, football has become a global phenomenon because millions of people agree to follow the same rules and objectives. These narrative systems enable society to be organized, channel collective efforts, and generate complex structures that would be unattainable in isolation.

It is essential to emphasize that human narratives not only facilitate cooperation, but also form the foundation upon which institutions and systems of power are built. From religion to economic systems, all major social structures are grounded in narrative systems that, once collectively accepted, acquire an almost tangible reality. In this sense, stories do not merely describe reality—they create and transform it. This capacity to shape the world makes human narrative systems powerful tools that can be used for both progress and oppression. Humanity has achieved remarkable feats such as space exploration, the construction of cities, and the establishment of justice systems, all made possible by the strength of shared narratives that drive individuals to act together.

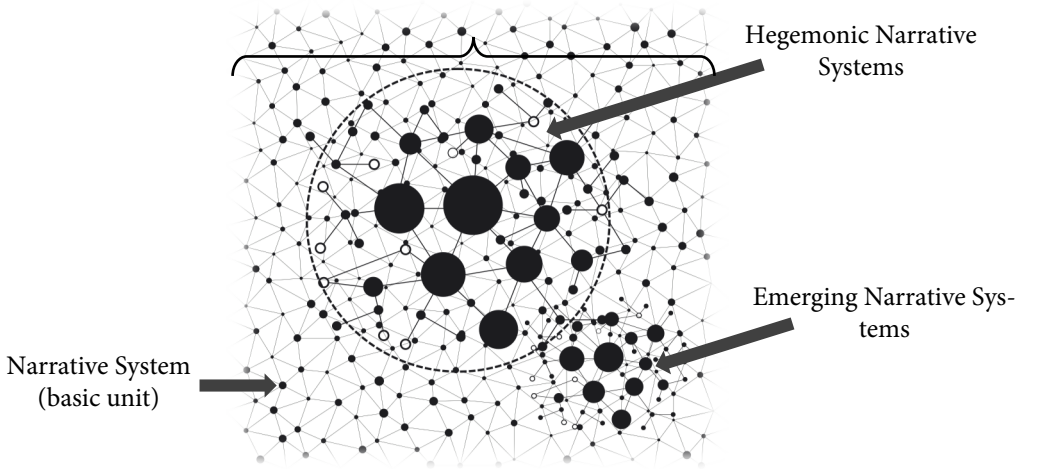
This power of narrative systems—what Harari describes as the "superpower" of Homo sapiens—invites reflection on the construction of knowledge and social reality. In this context, the *Cognosystemic Theory of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction* (TCCR) emerges as a theoretical framework that delves into how human narrative systems shape perception and organize collective behavior. The TCCR aims to uncover the mechanisms through which these stories are constructed, transmitted, and transformed over time, influencing all levels of the social ecosystem—from the individual to the cultural and institutional. Harari's reflection serves as an ideal starting point for introducing the TCCR, as it underscores the central role of stories in constructing reality and demonstrates how they allow human beings to transcend their individual limitations to create complex and meaningful worlds.

In sum, Harari's words highlight that the power of narrative systems goes far beyond the mere transmission of information: narratives are the scaffolding upon which society is built. Understanding this phenomenon—as proposed by the TCCR—enables a deeper analysis of how human beings construct their reality, how collective meanings are generated, and how narrative dynamics influence the evolution of social structures. In this sense, the TCCR not only seeks to describe the influence of the various existing narrative systems, but also to offer a framework for intervening in them and promoting meaningful change at the psychosocial level.

General framework of the TCCR

The *Cognosystemic Theory of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction* (TCCR) constitutes an advanced and comprehensive theoretical framework that seeks to provide a deep, detailed, and holistic interpretation of how human beings construct and reconstruct their psychosocial reality through intersubjective narrative processes. This theory emerges in response to the inherent complexity of human interactions, integrating interdisciplinary contributions that include perspectives from philosophy, psychology, sociology, systems theory, and contemporary epistemology. The central concept that defines and articulates this theory is the "Cognosystem," presented as an intricate, complex, and dynamic web of narrative systems that lay the constructionist foundations of what is commonly understood as "society." These systems interact continuously and persistently within specific sociocultural contexts and are analyzed from a systemic, transversal, and interrelated perspective.

COGNOSYSTEM



Significantly inspired by the "bioecological model" proposed by Bronfenbrenner, the TCCR organizes human psychosocial construction into various deeply interrelated systemic levels. These levels include the *microsystem*, which encompasses direct and everyday personal relationships, such as family or friendship interactions; the *mesosystem*, which refers to the dynamic interactions and synergies established between different groups and proximal contexts, such as the relationships between family and school; the *exosystem*, which considers indirect external contexts that have significant effects on individuals, such as parents' workplaces or local public policies; the *macrosystem*, composed of dominant cultural, ideological, and social paradigms that shape collective values and expectations; and finally, the *chronosystem*, which examines temporal processes and the changes that occur within these different systems over time.

This approach enables a thorough and nuanced analysis not only of individual and family narratives but also of those generated and transformed within broader social, cultural, and organizational contexts. It acknowledges the multiple complex interactions that

occur between these levels and promotes a deep understanding of the continuous adaptation and evolution that takes place in response to constant contextual transformations.

The concept of "narrative" is presented in the TCCR as an essential and fundamental epistemological category, understood specifically as the basic unit of the Cognosystem, also referred to as a cognosystemic "narrative system." This type of meaning system is not limited solely to the personal story or account of an individual; rather, it is configured as a complex, integrative cognitive-systemic process that enables individuals to organize and structure their perceptions of the world in an intersubjective and shared manner, continuously creating and recreating meanings that guide both the construction of personal identity and the making of decisions, as well as the establishment of interpersonal relationships. In this context, two key sub-concepts allow for a deeper understanding: *narrative cognoscitivity*, which addresses the mental and intersubjective processes that integrate emotional, symbolic, and cultural dimensions of human experience; and *narrative systemicity*, which understands narrative as an active and integral component of a complex and dynamic ecosystem composed of interdependent individual and collective narratives.

"Cognosystemic narrative systems" are structured and organized around eight fundamental and interrelated elements, which are essential for understanding their internal and dynamic functioning. These elements include *experience*, which constitutes the initial foundation upon which narratives are built; *perceptions and emotions*, which act as essential mediators of the narrative process; *context*, which decisively influences the form and content of narratives; *propositional content*, which forms the argumentative and conceptual core of the narrative; *cognitive evaluation*, the process through which narrative propositions are assessed and judged; *epistemic attitude*, which defines the subject's stance toward knowledge and its truthfulness; *narrative purpose*, understood as the underlying intention that guides and coheres the narrative; and finally, *narrative function*, which materializes meanings into concrete actions.

These narrative systems go through a clearly defined "life cycle" that reflects a complex and dynamic evolutionary process composed of distinct, interrelated stages: emergence, development, maturity, decline or transformation, and renewal. *Emergence* represents the initial stage in which a narrative system takes shape in response to new experiences or emerging challenges, thereby establishing its foundational meanings and concepts. During the *development* stage, the narrative expands and consolidates, acquiring complexity and adaptability through ongoing interactions and both internal and external feedback processes. The *maturity* stage is reached when the narrative achieves full and deep integration into individual or collective identity, becoming a dominant framework that guides decisions and behaviors in a stable and coherent manner.

Decline or *transformation* occurs when a narrative begins to lose relevance, faces significant internal contradictions, or ceases to respond effectively to contextual demands, generating tensions and imbalances that eventually lead to its questioning or substantial redefinition. This process may result in a fragmentation or profound restructuring of the narrative system, creating space for the emergence of new meaningful configurations. Finally, *renewal* involves a conscious and deliberate revitalization of the existing narrative system, or its strategic replacement by new narratives that offer more adaptive and relevant responses to current circumstances.

This evolutionary cycle operates within a dynamic of change characterized by specific phases known as *Beta* (stability), in which relative narrative coherence and internal

systemic balance prevail; *Alpha* (crisis), a stage of instability and conflict, where critical questioning arises that challenges narrative continuity and functionality; and *Delta* (reorganization and change), a phase in which significant adjustments, internal reconfigurations, and adaptive processes occur, aimed at restoring systemic coherence and stability in renewed contexts. These phases provide a robust analytical framework for understanding how narrative systems remain flexible and resilient, continuously adapting to transformations in the psychosocial and cultural environment.

Likewise, the TCCR recognizes that narratives do not exist in isolation, but operate within a dynamic, fluid, and constantly shifting "hierarchical structure." Within this complex narrative framework, some narratives succeed in occupying central or hegemonic positions, exerting significant influence over the perceptions, behaviors, and values of individuals and collectives, while other narratives remain in peripheral or marginal positions, limited in their ability to directly influence predominant systems. This phenomenon gives rise to a continuous dynamic of negotiation, conflict, adaptation, and repositioning among different narrative levels, where marginal narratives seek to ascend the hierarchy through innovative discursive processes, and dominant narratives attempt to maintain or reinforce their strategic position through discursive mechanisms of control and legitimization.

To explain these complex intersubjective processes of narrative negotiation and mobility, the TCCR introduces an innovative concept called the "cognosystemic meme." This refers specifically to a particular type of semantic unit intentionally used since the very origins of human existence in society, with the explicit purpose of influencing the evolutionary and adaptive course of narratives within the Cognosystem. Cognosystemic memes act as strategic agents of narrative change, capable of reinforcing and consolidating established narratives, generating significant discursive frictions that challenge and weaken dominant narratives, or facilitating effective processes of transition and transformation toward new, more adaptive and relevant narrative configurations. These memes, therefore, are presented not only as useful analytical tools for understanding narrative dynamics, but also as practical instruments that can be strategically employed to actively influence the construction and reconstruction of psychosocial realities, thereby promoting intentional and reflective processes of cultural and social change.

Finally, the TCCR offers a comprehensive and systematic analytical classification that distinguishes different types of narrative systems, thereby facilitating an in-depth and organized analysis of the various ways in which human beings construct meaning and orient their actions and decisions. This classification is initially divided into two broad categories: "intrapersonal" narrative systems and "extrapersonal" narrative systems.

"Intrapersonal" or individual narrative systems encompass those that structure the identity and subjective self-concept of the individual. Within these, *personal systems* include *identity systems*, which define the coherence and continuity of the "self"; *self-perceptive systems*, which determine how a person observes themselves in different contexts; and *self-evaluative systems*, which influence self-esteem and self-efficacy. *Ideological narrative systems*, in turn, establish the individual epistemological and axiological frameworks. These comprise philosophical, political, and religious or spiritual narratives, each with the capacity to adapt and evolve as the individual interacts with new experiences and contexts. As for *chronological narrative systems*, these organize the individual's temporal perception, including systems for *time valuation*, *sequential*, and *prospective*. Such systems provide a co-

herent framework for integrating past, present, and future events, thereby allowing for internal adaptive regulation in the face of change.

Within the "extrapersonal" or social dimension are *interpersonal narrative systems*, which facilitate the generation and transmission of shared meanings. These include *family*, *group*, and *community systems*, each fulfilling specific functions in the consolidation of collective identities and in adapting to social transformations. Likewise, *organizational narrative systems* represent symbolic structures that regulate interactions and define access to resources within *institutional*, *economic-commercial*, and *media-cultural contexts*, operating primarily at the exosystemic level. Finally, *sociocultural narrative systems* constitute the structural manifestation of the macrosystem, providing a global normative framework upon which minor narratives are constructed and negotiated. Within this level, *traditionalist*, *moralist*, *normativist*, and *juridical systems* stand out, as they uphold cultural cohesion and regulate the evolution of social norms.

This classification not only allows for a better identification and understanding of the functional and structural specificities of each narrative type, but also facilitates comparative study and the dynamic interaction among these diverse systems, offering an integrative framework capable of effectively capturing and analyzing the complexity, plurality, and richness inherent in human narratives in their multiple social, cultural, and individual manifestations.

In summary, the *Cognosystemic Theory of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction* (TCCR) proposes a comprehensive and highly sophisticated theoretical perspective that highlights the fundamental role of narratives as organizing structures and active agents of transformation in the multidimensional and multilevel constitution of human psychosocial reality. These narratives function not only as interpretative mechanisms that enable individuals and collectives to make sense of their everyday experiences, but also as catalysts that drive social evolution and change through complex and dynamic processes. Within this framework, narrative construction is conceived as a continuous and deeply interactive process, in which narratives are constantly adapted and modified in response to emerging social, cultural, and historical contexts. Moreover, this approach underscores the capacity of narratives to influence and reorganize both interpersonal and intergroup relations, as well as broader institutional and cultural structures, thereby enabling a deep and nuanced understanding of how human reality is continually shaped and reshaped through complex networks of symbolic and discursive interaction.

Fundamental elements of the TCCR

I. The "Cognosystem" as a general concept

The Cognosystem is a broad, dynamic, and complex conceptual framework that integrates all existing "cognosystemic narrative systems" within a sociocultural context, which is always analytically guided by a transversal, ecosystemic approach. This approach,

significantly inspired by the bioecological ecosystemic model, structures human psychosocial relational constructions—through narrative systems—into different levels: the microsystem (close and individual relationships), the mesosystem (connections between small groups or environments), the exosystem (external settings that indirectly affect individuals), the macrosystem (sociocultural values and beliefs), and the chronosystem (changes within these systems over time). Within the Cognosystem, not only individual, family, social, cultural, and organizational narratives are encompassed, but also the complex interactions that occur among them. These interactions are characterized by continuous feedback flows that enable the constant adaptation and evolution of narratives in response to transformations in the social and cultural environment.

CONCEPT:

Cognosystem: A concept that explains how *human narratives*—from personal stories to cultural beliefs—are interconnected and influence one another through a vast systemic network of meaning-making that is socioculturally interlinked. These human narrative systems are organized across different ecosystemic levels, such as close or family relationships, social groups, cultural influences, and more. The Cognosystem, therefore, illustrates how these constructions of meaning adapt and evolve over time, forming part of a larger cognosystemic narrative whole that gives coherence to the perceived human reality.

The Cognosystem stands as a multifaceted entity that encapsulates the richness and complexity of human interactions, as well as their capacity to generate and transform meanings. This integrative approach enables a holistic understanding of how narratives emerge, evolve, and engage in feedback processes across ecosystemic levels, responding to both endogenous and exogenous influences, while consistently maintaining a dynamic and adaptive process.

To gain a simplified and introductory understanding of the concept of the Cognosystem, it is essential to broadly explore the different proposed levels and their interactions—always from a systemic and holistic perspective, in which the levels mutually influence one another within a cybernetic feedback dynamic that encompasses both the individual and the collective, in a constant flow of bidirectional influence:

- **Microsystem:** This level encompasses the most immediate interactions in which individuals participate, but within a framework that emphasizes systemic interdependence. It is not merely about understanding how an individual is affected by their immediate environment, but also how their narrative contributes to collective dynamics. For example, family relationships not only shape individuals' self-perception but also contribute to the broader family narrative, influencing how the family as a whole is structured and how it faces challenges. In this way, individual

emotions and beliefs—such as self-acceptance or self-criticism—become part of the collective narrative, affecting how the family responds to external influences.

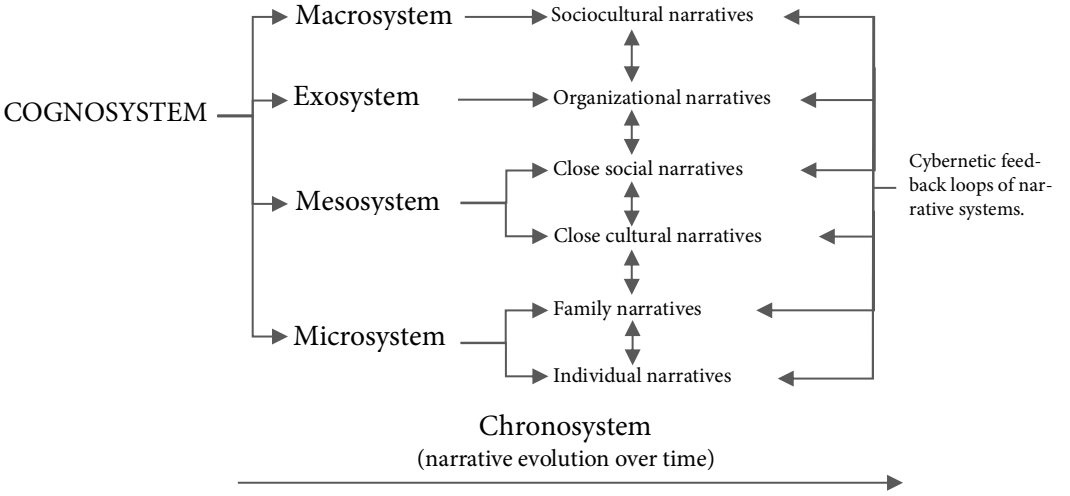
- **Mesosystem:** This level refers to the interaction between multiple microsystems, viewed through a lens in which each of these systems is nourished by the others, generating a narrative co-construction. For example, the relationship between an adolescent's family and their school not only influences the adolescent's self-perception, but also contributes to the collective narrative of both institutions. If a family and a school share a narrative about the importance of education, this can strengthen the adolescent's identity as part of a community committed to learning. Likewise, school narratives are modified and enriched by the experiences and expectations brought by families, creating a network of shared meanings.

- **Exosystem:** This level includes contexts that affect the individual indirectly, but that are part of a narrative network which both influences and is influenced by the individual and their microsystems. For example, the parents' workplace affects the family narrative not only in terms of available resources, but also in how relationships within the household are conceptualized. Parental work pressures may generate a family narrative about resilience and solidarity during times of stress, which then extends to other areas of the children's lives. This dynamic reflects the mutual dependence between narratives that emerge in seemingly distant spaces and those that are constructed within everyday family life.

- **Macrosystem:** This level refers to the cultural and social narratives that structure and influence all the preceding levels, while also being shaped by both collective and individual practices and beliefs. For example, a cultural narrative about respect for the environment not only influences how people understand their relationship with nature, but is also continuously redefined through actions at the family, community, and organizational levels. In a society beginning to adopt sustainable practices and question excessive consumption, these changes have an impact at the macro level, but also emerge from narrative transformations within households, schools, and businesses—generating a cybernetic dynamic of co-evolution between the cultural and the individual.

- **Chronosystem:** Finally, this level emphasizes the temporal dimension and its influence on the other levels of the Cognosystem, understanding time as an integrating element that enables the evolution of narratives across the different systemic levels. Transitions and historical events—such as migration or an economic crisis—not only affect individuals or their families in a linear manner, but also generate changes in collective narratives and in the way these narratives interrelate. For example, the process of cultural adaptation following migration simultaneously affects personal narratives of identity and family and cultural narratives of belonging. Thus, the chronosystem reflects the interdependence of narratives over time, ensuring that changes at one level generate responses and adaptations across all levels of the Cognosystem.

The Cognosystem, consequently, is presented as a suprasystem that not only encompasses each of these levels, but also connects and continuously feeds them back into one another, creating a complex and adaptive network. Narratives flow across the different levels, shaping individuals' perceptions of the world and of themselves, while changes at the individual level also contribute to the transformation of collective narratives. For example, a dominant cultural narrative about economic success can influence family expectations and behaviors, and ultimately, how individuals perceive themselves within the educational or labor system. Similarly, personal narratives related to self-esteem can, over time, influence broader narratives at the organizational or cultural level, generating transformations in collective values and beliefs.



As shown in the previous diagram, cybernetic interactions and feedback flows between these levels play a crucial role in the dynamics of the Cognosystem. *Upward feedback* occurs when individual and family narratives are amplified and come to influence organizational policies or broader cultural values. An example of this is the movement for equal rights, where personal narratives of injustice and inequality consolidate into a social movement that generates changes in norms and policies at the macro level. In contrast, *downward feedback* takes place when cultural narratives or public policies significantly affect more immediate levels, such as families or individuals. For example, social welfare policies can shape family narratives about security and community support, influencing how individuals perceive their role within society.

Finally, as will be seen in later sections, the Cognosystem is characterized by its *narrative plasticity*—that is, its capacity to adapt and reconfigure itself in response to contextual changes, whether endogenous or exogenous. This plasticity is what allows the Cognosystem to be resilient, maintaining its cohesion and functionality in changing environments. An example of narrative plasticity can be observed in immigrant families who, upon relocating to a new country, adjust their cultural and family narratives in order to integrate into the new context without losing their fundamental identity elements. Through this pro-

cess of adaptation, the Cognosystem is able to evolve, maintaining a balance between continuity and transformation.

In summary, the Cognosystem is not a static entity, but rather a system in constant motion that integrates multiple narrative levels—from the individual to the cultural—while continuously maintaining a flow of interaction and feedback. This narrative complexity and richness allow for a deep understanding of how individuals and communities construct, sustain, and transform their meanings in response to the diverse influences and challenges they face over time.

Fundamental characteristics of the "Cognosystem"

1. Systemic interconnectivity

The Cognosystem is characterized by a deep *systemic interconnectivity*, shaped by the constant and dynamic articulation of the *narratives* that compose it. These narratives interact across multiple levels, generating a complex network of meanings that operates as a cybernetic ecosystem. Within this network, narratives not only reinforce or weaken one another, but also engage in bidirectional feedback processes that enable the Cognosystem to adapt and evolve in response to contextual changes.

This interconnectivity is manifested in the capacity of individual narratives to scale up and influence collective and organizational levels, as well as in the impact of macrostructural narratives on microstructural ones. For example, a narrative of personal empowerment may originate from a transformative individual experience and, through its articulation in a community setting, become a catalyst for group change. When this phenomenon is replicated in other contexts, it may eventually influence the design of public policies or the reconfiguration of cultural values.

Analogously, hegemonic narratives such as consumerism—anchored in global discourses—can permeate down to the individual level, shaping decisions, identities, and interpersonal relationships. Thus, an advertising campaign that exalts self-efficacy through consumption not only influences individual expectations but also the social structures that reinforce such practices. This type of interaction illustrates how macrostructural narratives generate microstructural impacts that, in turn, can feed back into larger systems.

The narrative processes operating within the Cognosystem trigger systemic cascade effects, enabling the emergence of new meaningful configurations. For example, social movements such as feminism initially emerged, in earlier times, as narratives of resistance within marginalized groups (in this case, women lacking basic fundamental rights). Through their political articulation over time, these narratives have evolved into hegemonic narratives that now influence legislation and cultural norms on a global scale, transforming into other, more complex and hierarchically superior narrative systems—at times even significantly distant from their original ideological tenets. This case illustrates the capacity of narratives to redefine the structure of power within the Cognosystem.

Likewise, systemic interconnectivity generates networks of meaning that enable both stability and change. For example, in the educational sphere, initiatives aimed at social

inclusion can challenge exclusionary narratives, prompting transformation in organizational and cultural practices while simultaneously strengthening individual and group identities. The Cognosystem's capacity to integrate these emerging narratives underscores its resilient and evolutionary nature.

In summary, systemic interconnectivity constitutes a structuring principle of the Cognosystem, allowing for the coexistence and interaction of diverse narratives within a multilevel framework. This network not only enables continuous adaptation to social, cultural, and contextual transformations, but also opens spaces for meaningful change. Each narrative, regardless of its initial scale, holds the potential to influence the entirety of the suprasystem, reaffirming the interrelated and dynamic nature of the Cognosystem.

2. Narrative plasticity

In the context of the Cognosystem, *narrative plasticity* emerges as an essential property that enables the continuous adaptation of meanings in response to the changing demands of the social, cultural, and political environment. This attribute ensures the capacity of narratives to reconfigure themselves without compromising systemic coherence, thereby guaranteeing both their functional relevance and their resilience. Narrative plasticity not only reflects an adaptive mechanism for immediate response, but also constitutes a structural principle underlying the sustained evolution of the Cognosystem.

At the individual level, narrative plasticity is manifested in the transformation of personal meanings in response to destabilizing events. For example, a narrative centered on the accumulation of material success as an indicator of personal achievement may be reconfigured following an economic crisis, giving way to a deeper appreciation of effort or interpersonal relationships. This process of narrative adaptation not only preserves a coherent structure of meaning, but also enables the individual to maintain psychosocial well-being in an adverse context.

At the collective level, narrative plasticity can be observed in the capacity of societies to redefine their cultural paradigms in the face of global challenges. A paradigmatic example is climate change, which has driven the transition from narratives centered on unlimited industrial growth toward others that promote sustainability and ecological balance. These transformations, driven by both scientific discourse and social movements, illustrate how narrative reconfiguration can generate collective frameworks for action that challenge preexisting hegemonic structures.

Likewise, narrative plasticity plays a crucial role in the management of future crises. During the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional narratives about work and productivity were radically destabilized, enabling the widespread adoption of remote work modalities and prompting a profound rethinking of the relationship between personal and professional life. This example demonstrates the Cognosystem's capacity to reconfigure dominant narratives in response to unexpected events, not only mitigating their immediate impact but also opening new possibilities for social organization.

Narrative plasticity also functions as a prospective mechanism that enables the anticipation of potential crises through the integration of emerging narratives. For example, the recognition of cultural diversity in educational settings has facilitated the incorporation of inclusive narratives that challenge structural prejudices, promoting a gradual shift in

institutional and cultural practices. These transformations not only reflect an adaptation to present demands but also constitute an active preparation for future scenarios.

In conclusion, narrative plasticity constitutes a fundamental structuring principle of the Cognosystem, ensuring its capacity to confront change, generate new structures of meaning, and maintain its relevance across diverse contexts. This attribute not only strengthens the system's resilience but also facilitates continuous innovation, establishing itself as a key mechanism for the evolutionary stability and long-term sustainability of the Cognosystem.

3. Cybernetic multilevel feedback

The Cognosystem is configured as a cybernetic multilevel network, characterized by the constant interaction among narratives situated at different systemic levels. This feedback dynamic facilitates reciprocal influence between individual narratives (microsystems), family or group narratives (mesosystems), organizational narratives (exosystems), and cultural or social narratives (macrosystems), playing a crucial role in the adaptation, transformation, and resilience of the Cognosystem.

Mechanisms of multilevel feedback:

a. Upward feedback

Upward feedback describes the flow through which individual or local narratives scale up to broader systemic levels, facilitating a process of meaning transfer and amplification that progressively impacts group, organizational, and cultural narratives. This phenomenon occurs through mechanisms such as discursive reproduction on social networks, institutional legitimization, and cultural resonance, where personal experiences and perspectives find an echo and transform collective interpretive frameworks, thereby generating new narrative configurations at higher levels of the Cognosystem.

- **Social validation:** A personal narrative, such as an experience of overcoming adversity, can spread through its replication in social networks, digital forums, and community media, reaching levels of collective recognition that transcend the individual sphere. This process not only amplifies the perception of effort and resilience but also transforms the social frameworks through which these qualities are interpreted. For example, a shared story of overcoming economic hardship may inspire community initiatives to create support networks or generate changes in local policies, redefining standards of solidarity and collective action within the immediate social environment.

- **Institutional reinforcement:** Emerging narratives can also be adopted by institutions that grant them legitimacy by integrating them into formal structures and operational practices. This process involves not only the acceptance of these narratives but also their systematization within normative frameworks that consolidate their impact. For example, a workplace diversity narrative, initially promoted

by employees, may evolve into corporate policies that promote gender equity and inclusion, becoming a central component of organizational culture. This institutional reinforcement not only legitimizes the narrative but also transforms organizational structures, extending its influence to external networks and generating new practices across related sectors.

b. Downward feedback

Downward feedback refers to the systematic and structural influence that hegemonic or dominant narratives exert over individual and group narratives, shaping both their content and their forms of expression. This process involves not only the imposition of meanings from macrosystemic levels—such as dominant political or cultural discourse—but also the configuration of interpretive frameworks that either constrain or enhance narrative possibilities at lower levels of the system. In this sense, downward feedback operates as a mechanism of control and adaptation that can both consolidate existing structures and generate tensions that drive systemic change.

- **Hegemonic cultural narratives:** Hegemonic cultural narratives are those that exert a structural and persistent influence on the shaping of collective attitudes, values, and behaviors, functioning as metadiscourses that frame what is socially accepted and desirable. These narratives, originating at the macrosystemic level, are propagated through a combination of mass media, global distribution networks, and institutional discourses, shaping collective values around success, self-fulfillment, and well-being. A notable example is the narrative of meritocratic individualism, which promotes the idea that personal success is solely the result of individual effort, minimizing the structural and contextual conditions that influence development opportunities. This process of internalization leads individuals to attribute failure or success exclusively to themselves or others, reinforcing systemic inequalities and hindering the emergence of narratives that address power dynamics and social inequities.

- **Public policies:** Public policies represent a fundamental instrument of downward feedback by translating macrosystemic narratives into concrete guidelines that transform the micro and meso levels of the Cognosystem. This process involves not only the imposition of new rules, but also the reconfiguration of collective interpretive frameworks that shape cultural practices and values. For example, a policy aimed at preserving cultural heritage that designates certain traditions, stories, or monuments as national assets not only regulates their protection but also reinforces a community's or nation's identity narrative by positioning these elements as symbols that connect the present with the past. In this way, public policies act as catalysts that align divergent narratives toward shared goals while shaping new cultural and economic logic.

c. Horizontal feedback

Horizontal feedback occurs between narratives situated at the same systemic level, enabling a bidirectional exchange characterized by processes of mutual adjustment, reinterpretation, and transfer of meanings that may lead to collaboration, conflict, or shared transformations. This type of feedback reflects the system's capacity to integrate diverse perspectives within a common narrative framework, or alternatively, to generate tensions that serve as catalysts for narrative change at the same level.

- **Narrative frictions:** Narrative frictions arise from the collision of equivalent narratives competing for predominance at the same systemic level, generating tensions that act as drivers of change within the Cognosystem. This type of conflict exposes the inherent contradictions between rival perspectives and stimulates processes of negotiation, adaptation, and transformation of shared meanings. For example, the confrontation between conservative and progressive narratives within a community not only provokes intense debates but also prompts a critical reassessment of deeply rooted values and the reconfiguration of social practices that respond to the emerging demands of the context.

- **Narrative collaboration:** Narrative collaboration refers to the process through which narratives situated at the same systemic level converge to generate shared meanings, strengthening both the system's internal cohesion and its capacity for innovation. This type of interaction involves the integration of diverse perspectives that, rather than being diluted, complement one another in addressing common goals or shared challenges. For example, the integration of narratives on technology and sustainability in the business sector can give rise to projects that not only combine operational efficiency with positive environmental impact, but also redefine standards of corporate responsibility, generating a narrative framework that aligns economic interests with social and ecological values.

Consequently, it can be concluded that cybernetic multilevel feedback constitutes a fundamental axis for interpreting the evolutionary dynamics and adaptability of the Cognosystem. This multifaceted process, which operates through upward, downward, and horizontal interactions, enables narratives not only to transform and adjust to the constant changes of their environment but also to interact across systemic levels in ways that foster innovation and generate structural resilience. Within this network, individual narratives find resonance in collective ones, while hegemonic narratives influence local practices, creating an interconnected web of meanings. This capacity to respond to complex challenges—integrating diverse perspectives while maintaining systemic coherence—highlights the crucial role of feedback as a mechanism of balance and continuous evolution in narrative systems.

d. Language as a medium of feedback in the Cognosystem

Within the framework of the Cognosystem, language plays a fundamental constitutive role, operating as the principal ontological mechanism through which narratives

shape, sustain, and transform psychosocial reality. From the perspective of the TCCR, language is conceived not as a merely descriptive instrument, but as a generative and performative tool that shapes shared meanings, configuring human experience across all systemic levels. This approach challenges the traditional conception of language as a passive reflection of a preexisting objective reality, instead positing it as the active medium through which individual, group, and cultural realities are constructed and legitimized within the Cognosystem.

Language's capacity to "create" realities is manifested in its structuring function of human perceptions, attitudes, and actions. For example, in the political sphere, concepts such as "freedom" or "justice" lack an intrinsic, universal meaning; instead, they are discursively constructed through debates, legislation, and social practices that redefine their applications within specific contexts. Similarly, in the organizational domain, the adoption of language that promotes a "culture of innovation" can transform employees' perceptions of their roles and foster an environment that values change and creativity.

This generative property of language also enables the adaptability of narratives through linguistic exchanges across the different systemic levels of the Cognosystem. At the micro level, individual conversations can reconfigure personal meanings in response to particular experiences. At the macro level, media and cultural discourses expand and redefine collective narratives, as seen in the context of the climate crisis, where terms such as "ecological footprint" or "energy transition" emerge to influence everyday practices and global policies.

Moreover, the relationship between language and reality involves a continuous process of negotiation in which narratives compete for legitimacy and relevance. For example, in debates on social inclusion, language may oscillate between approaches that promote equity and others that prioritize individual merit, generating tensions that shape contrasting practices and policies depending on the prevailing discourse. This dynamism highlights language's capacity to articulate new narratives, preserve existing ones, and transform those that lose resonance in emerging contexts.

Within this framework, language undergoes a kind of "cycle" in its role as a mechanism of multilevel feedback within the Cognosystem, underscoring its central role as a generative and regulatory process in systemic interactions. In this context, language is not merely a means of expression, but functions as the primary mechanism that enables the articulation of narratives and their feedback dynamics within the suprasystem. This cycle operates through four interdependent functions: narrative construction, transformation of psychosocial realities, adaptation of narratives, and reconfiguration of shared meanings. Each of these functions contributes to the evolution, resilience, and coherence of the Cognosystem in the face of changing environments.

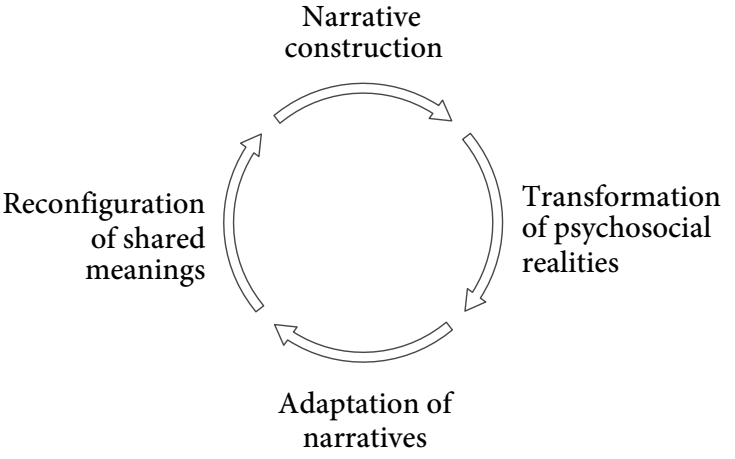
- **Narrative construction:** Narrative construction represents the process through which language shapes human experience by endowing it with coherent and shared meanings. These narratives do not merely describe reality—they actively create it, structuring events, relationships, and actions across all systemic levels. For example, the global narrative of "sustainability" emerges as a discursive framework that redefines values, practices, and policies in sectors as diverse as economics, culture, and education. Through language, these narratives provide cohesion to complex systems, legitimizing worldviews that guide collective behavior.

- **Transformation of psychosocial realities:** Language possesses a transformative power that modifies psychosocial structures by reconfiguring patterns of perception, interaction, and behavior. This potential is manifested in the capacity of language to catalyze changes in dominant narratives, directly impacting collective realities. For example, as previously mentioned, in the organizational sphere, a discourse that promotes a "culture of innovation" can profoundly alter workplace dynamics by fostering creativity, collaboration, and new forms of leadership. Similarly, in the political realm, narratives such as "equal opportunity" transform institutions and policies, generating more inclusive and adaptive structures.

- **Adaptation of narratives:** The language cycle also involves the capacity of narratives to adapt to changing and emerging contexts within the Cognosystem. These narratives evolve through linguistic exchanges that reconfigure their essential elements to ensure their relevance and applicability. A paradigmatic case is the COVID-19 pandemic, during which terms such as "new normal" and "social distancing" were rapidly incorporated into cultural narratives, reflecting and structuring a global response to the crisis. This process highlights the ability of language to respond swiftly to contextual demands and reinforce the stability of the Cognosystem.

- **Reconfiguration of shared meanings:** The reconfiguration of shared meanings is a continuous and fundamental process through which language enables the renegotiation and transformation of values and concepts. This mechanism is key in moments of narrative tension, when traditional interpretations are challenged and new perspectives emerge to meet the needs of the context. For example, in debates on social inclusion, terms such as "diversity" or "equity" are redefined to reflect the evolution of cultural and political demands. This process not only enables the adaptation of existing narratives, but also facilitates the generation of new structures of meaning that enrich the cohesion and complexity of the Cognosystem.

The language cycle in the Cognosystem



This dynamic and highly flexible cycle functions as a feedback system that interconnects narratives across the micro, meso, and macro levels. This process ensures that constructed narratives impact psychosocial realities, that these realities in turn demand the adaptation of narratives, and that shared meanings are reconfigured to sustain the cohesion and functionality of the suprasystem. For example, an individual narrative that promotes mental health may transcend to a community level, influence organizational policies, and eventually become part of a dominant cultural discourse. This continuous flow not only reinforces the stability of the Cognosystem but also drives its capacity for transformation and evolution in the face of environmental challenges.

In conclusion, language constitutes the essential foundation upon which psychosocial reality is built within the Cognosystem. Through its use, narratives acquire an active and transformative character, shaping intersubjective realities in constant evolution. This conception underscores the importance of language not only as a medium for the construction of meaning, but also as the primary driver of cohesion, adaptation, and change within narrative systems.

4. Narrative homeostasis

Narrative homeostasis within the Cognosystem constitutes an essential principle that enables the system not only to maintain a robust and resilient internal balance in the face of potentially destabilizing external influences, but also to effectively manage the inherent tensions of its dynamism. This balance does not entail a passive resistance to change, but rather a dynamic adaptability that ensures the system's functionality, cohesion, and relevance even in highly transformative contexts. By operating as an integrative mechanism, narrative homeostasis protects the preexisting narrative structure while enabling the incorporation of external elements that, far from fragmenting the suprasystem, contribute

to its evolutionary strengthening.

In this process, the Cognosystem finds a delicate balance between the stability required to preserve a coherent identity—at least from a functional systemic perspective—and the flexibility needed to integrate new meanings, thus ensuring its continuity and adaptive capacity in a constantly changing world.

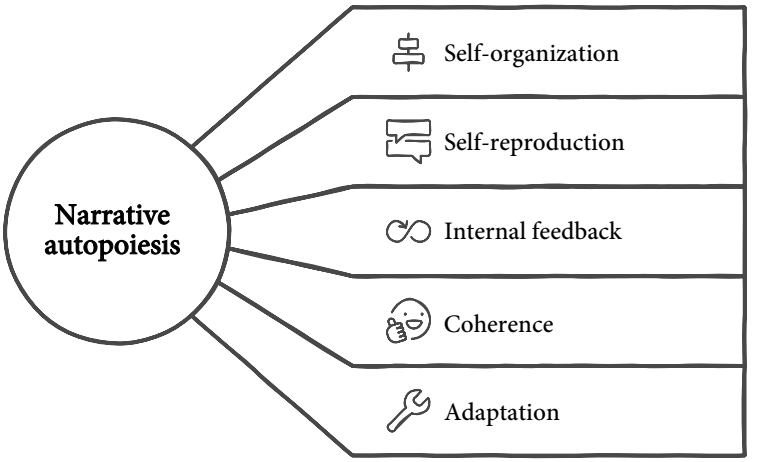
Narrative homeostatic autopoiesis:

An essential component of narrative homeostasis is its autopoietic nature—a concept that, as outlined in the theoretical framework of this work, finds its foundation in the systems theory of Maturana and Varela. In the Cognosystem, narrative autopoiesis refers to the inherent capacity of narratives to self-organize and self-reproduce from their own internal elements, without relying exclusively on external stimuli. This process ensures that narratives maintain their coherence and functionality through internal feedback mechanisms, establishing a self-referential system that balances stability with the capacity for transformation. In this way, autopoiesis ensures that the system's core meanings and essential values are preserved and adapted even in the face of radical change.

For example, in the political sphere, a narrative of "national unity" may reorganize itself in response to an economic or social crisis by incorporating discursive elements that reinforce its contemporary relevance without losing its essential identity. This autopoietic process enables the narrative to adjust to new challenges while maintaining its central role in the stability of the political and social system. Moreover, such narratives are often anchored in historical or cultural frameworks that enhance their legitimacy, providing continuity in times of uncertainty.

In the educational sphere, institutions face the need to adapt to a rapidly evolving digital environment. In this context, a university, for example, may draw on narratives that emphasize "academic excellence" and "pedagogical innovation" as guiding principles. These narratives not only facilitate the integration of technological tools, such as virtual learning platforms, but also reconfigure pedagogical processes by emphasizing inclusion, personalization, and interdisciplinarity. This approach strengthens the institution's core values, fostering active collaboration among faculty, students, and administrators to redesign academic programs that respond to emerging societal and technological demands, while maintaining institutional cohesion and relevance in a transformed environment.

In the cultural sphere, the autopoietic process of narratives becomes evident in the way traditional cultural identities adapt to the effects of globalization. For example, narratives of "cultural identity" reorganize themselves to integrate global elements such as new forms of artistic expression or social practices, without losing sight of their local roots. This balance between the global and the local allows cultural narratives to maintain their relevance not only within the communities in which they originated, but also within a broader international context. This process ensures that cultural identities not only persist but are enriched and continue to evolve.



Narrative homeostatic autopoiesis, consequently, not only ensures the functional stability of the Cognosystem, but also fosters its evolutionary dynamism. This process enables the system to withstand external influences that could destabilize it, while simultaneously transforming and reconfiguring its narratives to adapt to new realities. Moreover, this internal balancing mechanism facilitates the emergence of innovative narratives that align with the system's core values, strengthening its capacity to respond to future challenges.

In conclusion, narrative homeostasis constitutes the operational core of the Cognosystem, balancing stability and adaptability to ensure its continuity, relevance, and flourishing in a constantly changing environment. Its self-referential and dynamic nature guarantees not only the system's resilience, but also its capacity for transformation in response to emerging demands and contexts.

5. Cognosystemic narrative entropy

The concept of *entropy* is reinterpreted and adapted here to describe phenomena of instability, fragmentation, or lack of coherence within the open narrative systems that make up the Cognosystem. Although entropy is traditionally understood as a property associated with closed systems, it is employed here to explain transitional states that occur when narratives face challenges, crises, or external influences. This approach emphasizes that narrative entropy is not an inevitable movement toward chaos, but rather a temporary process that can serve as a precursor to significant transformations within the suprasystem.

When narratives within the Cognosystem are subjected to internal or external pressures, they may experience fragmentation or disarticulation, resulting in an increase in narrative entropy. For example, in a family context, a family facing a crisis—such as a sudden change in dynamics due to relocation or a significant loss—may experience fragmentation in its shared narratives, leading to temporary instability in communication and family roles. However, the open and dynamic nature of the Cognosystem allows these fragmented narratives to activate processes of self-organization and reconfiguration (narrative

homeostasis), through both internal and external influences on the family system. In such a case, the family may reconstruct its narratives through conversations that reinforce values such as unity and mutual support, enabling the initial crisis to become an opportunity to strengthen bonds and redefine shared goals, among other possible outcomes.

This phenomenon is also observed in the organizational sphere. For example, an organization undergoing a crisis of internal cohesion due to abrupt restructuring—such as mass layoffs or corporate mergers—may experience an increase in narrative entropy. In these contexts, traditional narratives related to stability or employee commitment may become inconsistent, generating uncertainty and a loss of trust among teams. However, this state of disarticulation can be transformed into an opportunity to generate new narratives that emphasize resilience, unity, and a shared vision. For instance, the implementation of transparent communication initiatives and participatory dialogue spaces can enable the organization to regain cohesion and strengthen its internal culture, using the initial entropy as a catalyst for positive and sustainable transformation. The development of a campaign that emphasizes organizational learning from past mistakes, for example, can not only restore stakeholder trust but also reinforce internal culture—transforming initial entropy into a driver of positive evolution.

In the cultural sphere, narrative entropy can emerge in societies facing tensions between deeply rooted traditions and globalization. Cultural narratives that once provided coherence may become fragmented under the influence of external values. For example, in a traditional community, the arrival of new forms of communication and cultural consumption may lead to the disarticulation of local narratives. However, these same tensions can give rise to hybrid narratives that combine traditional and global elements, offering a new form of cultural cohesion.

In this regard, cognosystemic narrative entropy should not be viewed as a threat to the system, but rather as a force that drives its evolution. States of narrative disorder or instability are opportunities for creativity and innovation within the Cognosystem, allowing narratives to transform in response to environmental demands. The Cognosystem's ability to manage and reconfigure its narrative entropy highlights its resilient nature and its potential to evolve toward new, more coherent and functional configurations.

6. Narrative mediation of intermediate levels of the Cognosystem

Within the theoretical framework of the Cognosystem, *narrative mediation between levels* constitutes a fundamental mechanism that enables the articulation and continuous flow of meanings across the different narrative strata of the suprasystem. In this context, *mesosystem* narratives play a crucial role by acting as bridges between individual narratives (microsystems) and collective or cultural narratives (macrosystems). This mediation process not only promotes social integration and cohesion, but also ensures the construction of a shared reality that balances diverse perspectives within the Cognosystem. Mesosystem narratives serve to translate, adapt, and reconcile meanings across levels, ensuring both the stability and adaptability of the system in the face of changing and complex environments.

An illustrative example of this dynamic can be observed in school communities, where narratives generated by teachers and administrators (mesosystem) mediate between

the individual experiences of students and their families and the broader sociocultural demands established by the educational system and local culture (macrosystem). A school narrative that promotes values such as "inclusion" and "respect for diversity" translates abstract principles into concrete pedagogical practices that are adapted to the particular needs of students. This process creates a more cohesive educational environment and reinforces the cultural values that underpin the dominant narrative. Moreover, these intermediate narratives can play a crucial role in conflict management, facilitating solutions aligned with collective values while strengthening trust among school stakeholders.

In the organizational sphere, human resources teams or mid-level leaders (mesosystem) also fulfill a significant mediating role. These intermediate narratives connect the strategic goals of the organization (macrosystem) with the individual aspirations of employees (microsystem). For example, a narrative that emphasizes "work-life balance" can articulate individual expectations for well-being with organizational objectives related to productivity and engagement. This type of narrative mediation not only contributes to improved employee satisfaction and a sense of belonging, but also facilitates the adoption of corporate strategies during times of transition, such as mergers or structural reorganizations. By generating a shared sense of purpose, these narratives strengthen internal cohesion and the organization's adaptive capacity.

In the community context, narratives generated by local organizations or neighborhood groups (mesosystem) mediate between the individual concerns of residents and the broader narratives promoted at the national level. For example, in communities facing tensions related to migration or demographic changes, community leaders may develop narratives that integrate local values with principles of social integration and coexistence. These intermediate narratives not only foster social cohesion but also enable communities to adapt to change by promoting constructive dialogue between local perspectives and national policies. Moreover, such narratives often play an active role in generating new spaces for civic participation, strengthening social bonds and intergenerational collaboration.

In summary, narrative mediation between levels, through mesosystemic narrative systems, constitutes an essential mechanism for ensuring the coherence and sustainability of the Cognosystem. By translating and adapting meanings across narrative levels, mesosystem narratives not only promote integration and social cohesion but also stimulate innovation and change within the system. This process ensures that individual and collective narratives remain relevant and aligned in a constantly evolving world. Moreover, it highlights the importance of mesosystems as key spaces for the articulation of meaning, the resolution of tensions, and the construction of a shared narrative that balances local and global, individual and collective perspectives within the framework of a cohesive and resilient narrative system.

7. Contextualization and adaptability

The *contextualization* and *adaptability* of narratives within the Cognosystem are presented as essential structural principles for ensuring their relevance and sustainability in environments marked by dynamism and uncertainty. These properties enable narratives to adjust and evolve according to the cultural, social, and temporal specificities of the contexts in which they operate. Contextualization ensures that narratives are meaningful and

operational, providing coherent interpretive frameworks that resonate with local experiences. On the other hand, narrative adaptability facilitates the transformation and evolution of these discursive structures in response to environmental demands, ensuring an optimal combination of internal coherence and external flexibility. This balance between consistency and narrative plasticity strengthens the Cognosystem's capacity to integrate local and global perspectives, effectively managing the challenges of complexity.

A paradigmatic example of this dynamic can be observed in environmental conservation projects. An initiative designed to protect marine ecosystems may require context-specific narratives: in traditional fishing communities, these narratives might focus on the sustainability of marine resources as a means of ensuring long-term economic security, while in urban areas they might highlight biodiversity as a crucial factor for planetary health and collective well-being. Additionally, in low-income communities, the narratives could emphasize the immediate economic benefits of conservation, such as job creation through ecotourism or the regeneration of natural resources. Adapting these narratives to the specificities of each group not only enhances communicative effectiveness but also strengthens collective commitment to shared environmental goals.

In the sports domain, narrative adaptability also plays a crucial role in generating approaches that are sensitive to the particularities of each setting. For example, a campaign to promote inclusive sports may adopt different strategies depending on the circumstances: in rural areas, it might focus on the development of accessible sports infrastructure, while in urban contexts, the emphasis could be on the psychological and social benefits of sports. In communities with a high incidence of disability, narratives might center on sports as a tool for social integration and personal empowerment. This level of adaptation ensures that sports initiatives are perceived as relevant and aligned with the needs of the groups they target, thereby promoting sustainable and meaningful outcomes.

In the religious context, narratives must also be carefully contextualized to address the specific characteristics of each community. An organization promoting interfaith values of peace and cooperation may need to adapt its message depending on the region in which it operates. In areas marked by religious conflict, narratives might focus on highlighting shared values across different faiths, such as solidarity or human dignity, whereas in more homogeneous communities, they might emphasize the richness brought by cultural and spiritual diversity. Additionally, in contexts with historical tensions, narratives could include examples of successful reconciliation and collaboration between different groups, thereby facilitating a constructive dialogue that fosters mutual understanding and cooperation.

Another significant example is found in the context of humanitarian crises, where narratives must be adapted to address both the needs of displaced populations and the concerns of host communities. In regions with significant economic limitations, narratives might focus on highlighting the benefits of integration, such as the economic dynamism generated by the labor and skills of refugees. Conversely, in countries with more established traditions of welcoming, narratives could emphasize values of historical solidarity and moral responsibility. These adaptations not only ensure support for humanitarian initiatives but also reinforce host communities' commitment to inclusive and sustainable solutions.

The Cognosystem's capacity to contextualize and adapt its narratives not only ensures their relevance across diverse environments but also reinforces its resilience in the

face of environmental volatility. This narrative flexibility enables the Cognosystem to incorporate new information, perspectives, and demands, facilitating the generation of creative and innovative responses to emerging challenges. Moreover, the ability to reinterpret narratives in light of changing environmental conditions ensures that they retain their role as cohesive, transformative, and meaning-generating forces. Ultimately, narrative contextualization and adaptability stand as structural pillars of the Cognosystem, contributing not only to its sustainability and effectiveness but also to the inclusion and active participation of all actors involved, in a world characterized by complexity and constant transformation.

8. Intersectional narrative diversity

Intersectional narrative diversity is defined as the suprasystem's capacity to integrate and reflect narratives originating from diverse identities, experiences, and positions of power. This concept emphasizes that narratives do not exist in isolation, but are deeply shaped by the intersecting experiences of the actors who construct them, forming a complex network of meanings that responds to multiple axes of oppression and privilege. Drawing inspiration from the notion of the "matrix of domination" proposed by Hill Collins, the TCCR explores how narratives are configured, adapted, or resisted within the Cognosystem according to factors such as gender, race, religion, social class, or individual ideologies. This narrative diversity is essential for understanding the interactions between hegemonic and marginalized narratives, as well as the dynamics of reinforcement and resistance that emerge across the micro, meso, and macro levels.

A concrete example of this diversity can be observed in the educational sphere. In a multicultural school system, the narratives of students from Indigenous communities or ethnic minorities often contrast with dominant narratives that reflect the values and perspectives of the prevailing culture. For instance, an Indigenous student may bring with them a narrative rooted in respect for nature and community interdependence, which may come into tension with the narratives of competitive individualism promoted by the educational system. However, these tensions can also create opportunities for educational institutions to incorporate more inclusive and equitable perspectives, enriching shared narratives and fostering an environment of mutual respect and intercultural learning.

In the workplace, intersectional narrative diversity is also manifested in decision-making and leadership processes. For example, in an organization seeking to diversify its leadership team, the narratives of leaders from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds may bring perspectives that differ from those of their peers with more privileged trajectories. A female executive who grew up in a rural community might emphasize the importance of initiatives that promote the inclusion of local talent or investment in peripheral economies, while another executive with international experience might prioritize global expansion strategies. This narrative exchange can generate more comprehensive strategies capable of balancing local and global interests, thereby strengthening organizational resilience and creativity.

In the political sphere, intersectional narrative diversity is manifested in social movements. For example, a women's rights movement may be composed of narratives that reflect diverse experiences shaped by factors such as gender, social class, or race. While one narrative may focus on pay equity in urban contexts, another may emphasize the fight

against gender-based violence in rural communities. This intersection of perspectives not only enriches the movement but also presents the challenge of articulating an inclusive narrative that represents diverse experiences without rendering any of them invisible.

Ultimately, intersectional narrative diversity is a crucial element for the functioning of the Cognosystem, as it enables the incorporation of voices and perspectives that enrich the collective understanding of reality. By exploring and articulating narratives stemming from different positions of power and experience, the Cognosystem not only reflects the complexity of human relationships but also creates the conditions for social transformation, mutual learning, and the construction of a shared narrative that is inclusive and equitable.

II. The "cognosystemic narrative" as a concept

In the context of the fundamental elements of the TCCR—as has been clearly demonstrated thus far—"*narratives*" emerge as a central and articulating concept within the Cognosystem, one that transcends the simple category of superficial stories or accounts.

CONCEPT:

Narrative System: This is the *basic unit* that forms the fundamental structure of the Cognosystem, conceived as a psychosocial process of a cognitive-systemic nature for the relational construction of reality. Through this elemental process, individuals intersubjectively organize and structure their perceptions of the world, creating meanings that guide both their identity and their decisions and social relationships—all based on that constructed and perceived reality.

Within the theoretical framework presented, these "basic units" of the Cognosystem are conceived as a special type of complex systems, characterized by their dynamic, multidimensional, and emergent nature. These units are composed of interconnected meanings that include perceptions, beliefs, values, emotions, and collective memories. Narratives, understood as living processes, evolve continuously as they are shaped by the experiences, contexts, and relationships that nourish them. Consequently, this approach conceptualizes narratives both as products of transformation and as essential drivers for structuring and giving meaning to perceived reality, adapting to the challenges of a constantly changing environment. In this sense, the cognosystemic narrative is positioned as a fundamental tool for understanding how individuals, communities, and larger systems construct their realities, make decisions, and evolve over time.

Based on the foregoing, the following are the two fundamental sub-concepts of the *cognosystemic narrative system*, as proposed by the TCCR:

1. Narrative cognoscitivity

From the cognosystemic perspective, narrative is conceptualized as both a mental (individual/personal) and intersubjective (relational/collective) process that enables the psychosocial organization and structuring of one's perception of the world. This process, while intrinsically cognitive—due to its fundamental role in information processing—is deeply intertwined with emotional, symbolic, and cultural components, which confer upon it a multidimensional richness. Narratives function as hermeneutic systems through which individuals and groups construct meanings that guide their actions, decisions, and relationships, thereby shaping an interpretive framework for understanding identity and the position of subjects within specific sociocultural contexts. This mechanism operates simultaneously on conscious and implicit levels, shaping automatic responses and intuitive judgments that emerge from the ongoing interaction between accumulated experiences and contextual environments.

a. **Definition and nature of narrative cognoscitivity:** Narrative is defined as a structural axis of human experience, essential for the psychosocial configuration of perceived reality. As previously mentioned, from the perspective of the TCCR, this process integrates not only cognitive dimensions but also emotional, symbolic, social, and cultural aspects that enrich its complexity and interpretive depth. Narratives function as architectures of meaning that systemically structure individuals' actions, decisions, and relationships, providing a reference framework from which personal identity and social contexts are constructed. This process encompasses both active reflection at the conscious level and the implicit influence of accumulated experiences, which shape automatic patterns of thought, behavior, and relational dynamics.

b. **Narrative cognoscitivity in the family context:** Within the family sphere, narratives constitute an organizing system of meaning that has a transversal impact on all members of this fundamental social system, regardless of age. For children, family narratives represent the first hermeneutic framework through which they internalize core values such as collaboration and mutual support, which guide their interactions and psychosocial development. For adults, these narratives function as tools for identity consolidation and the intergenerational transmission of values and relational patterns. For example, a family environment that prioritizes dialogue and cooperation not only fosters effective conflict resolution strategies in children but also reinforces group cohesion and a sense of belonging among adults. Moreover, shared family stories play a crucial role in perpetuating values and strengthening collective identity over the long term, thereby establishing a meaningful narrative legacy.

c. **Narrative cognoscitivity in organizational contexts:** In organizational settings, narratives function as symbolic structures that mediate shared understanding of reality and guide collective actions. In times of structural transformation, a narrative that promotes "transformation as opportunity" can facilitate the reinterpretation of challenges as vectors for professional and organizational development.

These narratives, operating at both conscious and implicit levels, influence how individuals process change, fostering resilient and adaptive organizational cultures. Consequently, organizational narratives not only provide internal cohesion but also drive innovation and strategic alignment in dynamic environments.

d. **Narrative cognoscitivity in the sociocultural sphere:** In the sociocultural sphere, narratives play a structuring role in defining collective values, norms, and practices. These narratives, shaped within specific historical and cultural contexts, act as interpretive frameworks that guide communities' understanding of the past, management of the present, and projection into the future. National narratives about heroism or resistance, for example, can consolidate a sense of collective identity and foster social cohesion, while global narratives about sustainability and social justice mobilize efforts toward common goals. These sociocultural narratives integrate individual and collective meanings, establishing interpretive matrices that dynamically interact with social structures and, at times, challenge them—generating significant transformations within the symbolic and behavioral fabric of societies.

e. **Narrative cognoscitivity in crisis situations:** In crisis contexts, narratives emerge as fundamental instruments for the reorganization of meaning and resilient adaptation. These narratives enable the reconfiguration of individual and collective perceptions in the face of traumatic events, fostering social cohesion and adaptability. For example, in communities affected by natural disasters, narratives that emphasize resilience and collective solidarity can transform experiences of loss into opportunities for community strengthening. These narratives not only reconstruct the subjective interpretation of the event, but also facilitate the coordination of collective responses, such as infrastructure rebuilding or the implementation of emotional support networks. In this sense, narrative functions as a catalytic axis that articulates adaptive responses and reinforces both the individual and the collective in the face of adversity.

2. Systemicity of narrative

In the cognosystemic approach, as previously mentioned, human narrative is conceived as part of an ecosystem of interconnected narratives operating at various levels: individual, familial, organizational, social, and cultural. This *systemic framework* allows for an understanding of how individual narratives are integrated into collective narratives, and how the latter influence and transform the subjective experiences of individuals.

Narrative systems, therefore, play a central role within the Cognosystem, understood as a self-regulating suprasystem that organizes, feeds back, and maintains narrative coherence across its various levels. This process ensures the system's internal cohesion and overall adaptability, while allowing interactions between narratives to reinforce its functionality and capacity for change.

a. **Definition of narrative systemicity:** From this perspective, *narrative systemicity* is defined as the capacity of narratives to form part of an integrated ecosystem that functions across multiple levels. This implies that individual narratives are not only connected to collective narratives but also contribute to shaping both subjective and social constructions. Within the Cognosystem, these narratives are organized in a self-regulating manner, promoting the overall coherence and adaptability of the system.

b. **Systemic interactions:** The Cognosystem makes it possible to analyze how narratives flow across different levels. At the individual level, narratives focus on personal stories that reflect unique experiences, while at the cultural level, they encompass shared meanings that structure the values and norms of society. These interactions are not unidirectional; individual narratives also shape collective ones, creating a cycle of mutual influence that fosters both the stability and the evolution of the suprasystem as a whole.

   A paradigmatic example of this systemicity can be found in non-governmental organizations (NGOs). For instance, an NGO dedicated to human rights may construct an organizational narrative centered on "dignity and universal respect." This narrative influences staff members, who internalize these values and adapt them into their own personal narratives. In turn, the experiences of beneficiaries enrich and reconfigure the institutional narrative. If an NGO promotes the importance of "giving voice to the silenced," feedback from beneficiaries may reshape this narrative to include new perspectives on the challenges they face. This process not only reinforces the legitimacy of the organizational narrative but also highlights its adaptability and responsiveness to emerging realities.

   Another illustrative example of narrative systemicity occurs within social movements. These movements articulate collective narratives that connect the individual experiences of participants with broader social demands. A movement advocating for better labor conditions in the manufacturing industry, for instance, may gather individual stories of workers affected by labor exploitation and integrate them into a collective narrative centered on "dignity in the workplace." This narrative is amplified as it circulates between individual and collective levels, generating a shared sense of purpose that drives collective action. Furthermore, this circulation helps consolidate the movement's identity, enabling its growth and sustainability.

c. **Adaptability and connectivity in narrative systemicity:** Adaptability is a fundamental characteristic of narrative systemicity. Collective narratives are continuously adjusted to reflect new realities and maintain their relevance. This adjustment not only ensures the functionality of the Cognosystem but also reinforces connectivity between levels. For example, during a global health crisis, individual-level narratives about "self-care" and "solidarity" can be integrated into collective narratives that promote international collaboration and equity in access to medical resources. This type of narrative integration fosters a coherent and effective systemic response to global challenges.

d. **Narrative systemic autopoiesis:** Narrative autopoiesis, as previously discussed, refers to the capacity of narratives to self-organize and self-regulate, maintaining their internal coherence while adapting to new contexts. This process enables the Cognosystem to evolve flexibly, adjusting to external demands without losing its core identity. Narrative autopoiesis ensures that narratives not only respond to environmental changes but also creatively incorporate them, generating new structures of meaning.

   For example, in the political sphere, a narrative of "national unity" can be reconfigured in the face of an economic or social crisis. Short-term narratives may focus on collective cooperation to overcome immediate challenges, while long-term narratives emphasize the nation's historical capacity to confront adversity. This process ensures that the narrative remains relevant and mobilizing.

   In the business sphere, a narrative of "workplace well-being" can be restructured in response to high levels of professional burnout. Initiatives such as flexible schedules, mental health programs, and work-life balance policies can be incorporated into this narrative, transforming it into a central axis for strengthening both employee productivity and commitment. This autopoietic approach allows the organization to remain resilient and aligned with its core values.

In summary, the cognosystemic narrative is simultaneously a product and a process within the Cognosystem. Its capacity to structure meanings, integrate into broader systems, and self-regulate makes it an essential tool for understanding the dynamics of human relationships and the construction of psychosocial reality. By analyzing narratives from this perspective, the TCCR offers a powerful theoretical framework for exploring the complexities of human experience at all levels, providing tools to interpret and transform both individual and collective realities.

III. The basic structure of a narrative system

As previously mentioned, *narrative*—as a system—holds a central position as an organizing axis and generator of meaning in human experience. Far from being a mere collection of disconnected stories or beliefs, the cognosystemic narrative system is presented as a dynamic, complex, and interrelated structure, whose functioning depends on the interaction among its constitutive elements. These elements not only enable the formation and evolution of narratives, but also determine how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to the demands of their environment, shaping a psychosocial construction deeply rooted in intersubjective reality.

In this framework, the structure of the cognosystemic narrative system is organized around a series of interdependent elements that define its function and operability. The following are the eight basic components of a narrative system from the perspective of the TCCR:

1. Experience.
2. Perceptions and emotions.

3. Context.
4. Propositional content.
5. Cognitive evaluation.
6. Epistemic attitude.
7. Narrative purpose.
8. Narrative function.

This section is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of these essential components of the cognosystemic narrative system, providing a well-defined theoretical foundation for understanding the processes of narrative formation, validation, and transformation.

1. Experience

Experience constitutes the essential foundation upon which narratives are constructed, validated, and transformed within the Cognosystem. It serves as the primary input for the generation of meaning, connecting lived events with subjective interpretive processes that guide both perception and action. This phenomenon includes direct experiences, indirect (or vicarious) experiences, emotional/critical experiences, and repeated or repetitive experiences—all of which intertwine to influence the stability, adaptability, or transformation of narratives. The dynamics of experience do not operate in isolation; their impact is amplified through the frequency, intensity, and interpretation that individuals assign to each experience.

Dimensions of experience:

a. **Direct experiences (primary generators of narratives):** Direct experiences are immediate and personal events that exert a direct impact on narrative construction. For example, a university student participating in her first debate feels a mix of nervousness and satisfaction upon receiving praise for her arguments. This initial event may lay the foundation for an emerging narrative that reinforces her confidence in her public speaking skills. However, if in a subsequent debate she receives harsh criticism, this narrative might be reconfigured into a more nuanced perception of her abilities, suggesting the need for further preparation. These experiences demonstrate how direct encounters not only serve as triggers for narratives but also act as catalysts for their evolution.

b. **Indirect or vicarious experiences (observation as narrative input):** Vicarious experiences arise from observing events lived by others and play a crucial role in narrative formation. For example, in a workplace setting, an employee may observe a colleague who works long hours being promoted, thereby generating a narrative that links extreme effort with professional success. However, if that same employee later sees another colleague promoted without demonstrating similar dedication—perhaps due to favoritism—the initial narrative may begin to falter. This illustrates the capacity of vicarious experiences to modify and challenge existing narratives.

c. **Emotional and critical experiences (potentially transformative):** Experiences that carry a high emotional charge or represent turning points in a person's life tend to have a disproportionate impact on narrative construction. For example, an entrepreneur who faces failure in their first venture may experience frustration and begin to question a prior narrative of competence and success. However, if they later launch a new business that thrives, their narrative may shift toward one of resilience and learning. These experiences influence not only the intensity of narratives but also their durability and adaptability in changing contexts.

d. **Repeated or repetitive experiences:** The repetition of experiences plays a fundamental role in the consolidation or evolution of narratives. For example, a teacher who consistently observes positive responses from students to their teaching methods may consolidate a narrative of being effective in their profession. Conversely, if students begin to regularly display disinterest or poor performance, that narrative may evolve toward a perception of inefficacy. Moreover, the subjective interpretation of these experiences—shaped by prior beliefs and emotional contexts—determines whether narratives adapt or remain resistant to change.

Experience, ultimately, is a fundamental component of the cognosystemic narrative system, as it serves as the primary and continuous engine for the generation and transformation of meaning. Through the interaction of lived experiences, interpretations, and emotions, narratives are either consolidated or transformed, allowing individuals to reorganize their perceptions of the world and adapt to the challenges and opportunities they encounter in their environment.

2. Perceptions and emotions

Within the framework of the TCCR, perceptions and emotions are positioned as core elements of the narrative structure, mediating the construction, validation, and transformation of these systems of meaning. *Perceptions* are subjective interpretations derived from experience, shaped by contextual, biographical, and *emotional* factors, while emotions represent the affective responses that amplify or diminish the weight of these perceptions. Together, they form an interactive framework that shapes the configuration of beliefs, endowing narratives with coherence, depth, and dynamism.

a. Perceptions

Perceptions act as the cognitive filter through which individuals process and interpret their experiences. They are not mere objective reflections of reality, but rather subjective constructions shaped by personal history, cultural and social context, and emotional states. Perceptions constitute the interpretive framework that gives meaning to lived experiences and defines the foundation upon which narratives are built.

For example, a student who receives positive feedback on their participation in a project perceives that their effort is being recognized, which reinforces a narrative of personal competence. However, if they later receive criticism without constructive guidance,

their perception may shift toward a narrative of self-doubt. This perceptual shift demonstrates how narratives continuously adjust to new interpretations of reality.

On the other hand, a businesswoman who observes that her competitor is implementing more aggressive market strategies may perceive this as an immediate threat, consolidating a narrative of business vulnerability. However, if she chooses to reinterpret the situation as an opportunity to innovate and diversify her offerings, her perception will evolve into a narrative of adaptability and resilience.

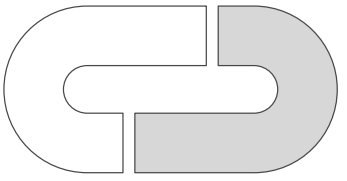
b. Emotions

Emotions, in turn, are affective responses that amplify the interpretive weight of perceptions. They not only intensify or challenge existing narratives but also determine how deeply these narratives are integrated into the cognitive system. Emotions also function as anchors in memory, consolidating experiences that are emotionally significant. For example, an employee who is recognized for their performance experiences emotion and pride, reinforcing a narrative of self-confidence and motivation. However, if that same employee later feels ignored or undervalued in a key project, the resulting frustration may erode their positive narrative, leading to a perception of being undervalued within the organization.

The synergy between perceptions and emotions

The relationship between perceptions and emotions is intrinsically bidirectional and generates a feedback loop that can either strengthen or transform narratives. Perceptions provide the cognitive content of narratives, while emotions endow them with affective intensity, determining their relevance and staying power. For example, during a public demonstration, a person perceives governmental inaction as an injustice, which triggers indignation. This emotion reinforces a narrative of activism and commitment. However, if the individual perceives that collective efforts fail to produce tangible results, the resulting discouragement may weaken this narrative, transforming it into one of resignation or demotivation.

Perceptual-emotive feedback of the cognosystemic narrative



Emotions
Affective responses that influence perceptions.

Perceptions
Subjective interpretations of sensory origin that influence emotions.

In summary, within the TCCR, perceptions and emotions are not considered isolated phenomena, but rather interdependent components operating across multiple levels of the Cognosystem. This bidirectional interaction makes it possible to understand how cognitive perceptions, when filtered through emotional states, generate narratives that are both a reflection and a driving force of psychosocial dynamics. Delving into this relationship provides a comprehensive view of the forces that shape the formation and transformation of narratives, as well as strategies to intervene in these structures. Perceptions condition emotions and vice versa, giving rise to narratives that may consolidate belief systems or challenge their stability in the face of changing environments. In this way, studying this interaction also enables more effective intervention designs that promote narrative resilience and adaptive capacity across different levels of the Cognosystem.

3. Context

Context emerges as an essential component in the configuration of narratives within the Cognosystem, acting as the frame of reference that profoundly influences how individuals and collectives perceive, process, and respond to reality. This framework encompasses a wide range of external and internal factors, including cultural, social, familial, sociopolitical, and educational dimensions, which interact to shape the stories that construct meaning in human experience.

Context not only establishes the conditions under which narratives emerge but also defines their applicability, relevance, and scope. By acting as both a symbolic and material filter, context enables individuals and groups to give meaning to their experiences, shaping how they interpret events and develop narratives that guide their decisions and behaviors.

For example, a person raised in a culture that values perseverance and collective effort will tend to generate narratives that reflect these core beliefs. However, in an environment where individualism predominates, these same narratives may be reformulated to adapt to a reality perceived as more competitive.

Contextual dimensions

- **Cultural dimension:** Culture provides the symbolic framework within which narratives are articulated. In a collectivist society, the narrative that "Cooperation ensures success" may prevail, encouraging actions oriented toward solidarity in community projects. In contrast, in individualistic cultures, stories tend to focus on personal achievements such as "Individual effort is the key to progress," emphasizing autonomy and self-sufficiency.

- **Social dimension:** Social structures and interpersonal relationships shape how narratives develop and are sustained. For example, in rural communities where resource sharing and collaborative work prevail, narratives may center on the importance of reciprocity, such as "Helping neighbors strengthens everyone." In more fragmented urban environments, stories may revolve around self-sufficiency, such as "Everyone must find their own path."

- **Familial dimension:** The family context serves as the first space where early narratives are shaped. For example, a person raised in a family that prioritizes intellectual debate might develop a narrative centered on "Discussion enriches knowledge." In contrast, a household that values obedience and structure may generate a narrative based on "Respect for rules ensures harmony."

- **Sociopolitical dimension:** Economic and political conditions provide a broad framework that influences collective narratives. In a country with a stable economy and clear opportunities for social mobility, narratives may reflect optimism, such as "Progress is achievable for everyone." In a context of economic crisis or governmental corruption, narratives tend to focus on resilience, such as "Adaptation is key to survival."

- **Educational dimension:** Educational institutions shape narratives related to learning and personal development. For example, in an educational system that encourages independent research, students may internalize narratives such as "Curiosity is the foundation of knowledge." In a system with structural limitations, narratives may revolve around overcoming barriers, such as "Education is a privilege that requires extra effort."

Impact of context on narrative evolution

Context plays a crucial role not only in the creation of narratives but also in their capacity for transformation, adaptation, and evolution. It acts as a mediator that enables narratives to adjust to the demands of a dynamic environment, ensuring their functionality and relevance. In favorable environments, context reinforces the internal coherence of the Cognosystem by consolidating narratives that are supported by prevailing experiences and values. However, in challenging scenarios or crisis situations, context challenges preexisting narratives, driving them toward continuous reconfiguration in order to align with new realities, emerging demands, or challenges. This adjustment process not only reflects narrative resilience but also highlights its capacity to integrate contradictory elements and generate meaningful structures under adverse conditions.

Ultimately, context is an indispensable framework that shapes, sustains, and transforms narratives within the Cognosystem. Its influence—spanning cultural, social, familial, sociopolitical, and educational dimensions—ensures that narratives remain relevant and functional in relation to the demands of the environment. By acting as both a symbolic and material structure, context ensures that the stories people construct continue to serve as powerful tools for interpreting and responding to a constantly changing world.

4. Propositional content

Propositional content stands as the conceptual core that defines the essence and orientation of cognosystemic narratives. This fundamental element is composed of one or several specific "statements" or "propositions" that reflect a perceived or anticipated reality, determining what an individual or collective considers true, relevant, or possible within

their logical cognitive framework. As the structural basis of narratives, propositional content provides initial coherence and clarity to the narrative system through explicit and semantic affirmations of foundational beliefs. Thus, it offers a precise and concrete interpretive direction regarding "what the narrative linguistically expresses" in relation to the world and the social dynamics that shape it.

Propositional content, therefore, is configured as the set of core beliefs—transformed into concrete affirmations—that guide individuals' actions and decisions, operating as cognitive filters that shape their perception of the environment. For example, a university student who adopts the belief that "learning is the key to personal and professional success" structures their narrative around this proposition, motivating them to invest effort and time in their studies. When their experiences validate this proposition—such as receiving praise for academic performance—the narrative is reinforced and gains greater stability. However, if the student encounters an unexpected failure, their narrative may evolve toward a more complex construction, such as "learning also involves adapting to mistakes and overcoming obstacles."

Similarly, in the workplace, the propositional content "effort and dedication are always rewarded" may motivate an employee to take on challenging tasks. This content is consolidated when the environment validates their narrative through promotions or recognition. However, if the employee observes that less committed colleagues achieve promotions due to external factors such as favoritism, their initial narrative may be questioned and transformed into a more nuanced perspective, such as "effort is important, but success also depends on external contexts and relationships."

At the collective level, propositional content also plays a crucial role in shaping social and cultural narratives. For example, in a community facing an economic crisis, the proposition "solidarity is essential to overcoming crises" can act as a catalyst for cooperation and joint action, strengthening community bonds. However, if the prolonged crisis generates internal tensions or perceived inequalities, this narrative may evolve into a more complex proposition, such as "solidarity is necessary, but it must be balanced with justice and equity to be sustainable." This adjustment illustrates how propositional content adapts to new realities, allowing narratives to remain functional and relevant.

A relevant aspect to consider is that propositional content, being an intrinsically cognitive element, establishes a constant interactive dynamic with other elements of the individual, such as perceptions, emotions, and contextual experiences, thereby determining its stability or transformation. For example, a narrative based on the proposition "innovation always generates progress" may be questioned in a corporate context where the implementation of disruptive technologies leads to unemployment or labor tensions. This experience could prompt the evolution of the narrative toward a broader proposition, such as "innovation is beneficial when implemented with a socially responsible approach."

Narratives with multiple propositions at their core and narratives with complementary cores

Based on the previous discussion, it is important to clarify that the *core* of a narrative, identified as the *propositional content*, is generally constituted by a single essential proposition or affirmation that structures and provides semantic coherence to the entire

narrative. This core operates as the organizing axis upon which the premises and arguments that make up the narrative body are developed. However, the question regarding the coexistence of multiple propositions at the core challenges traditional conceptions and opens new avenues for cognosystemic analysis.

In this regard, the possibility of incorporating multiple propositions at the narrative core is theoretically plausible within the framework of the TCCR, as long as these propositions maintain a coherent and synergistic relationship with one another. Below are some important aspects to consider on this point:

a. **Cores composed of complementary propositions:** In certain more complex narratives, the core may be composed of complementary propositions that, through their interaction, configure a central idea that is more sophisticated and coherent than the sum of its parts. These propositions, when isolated, lack full meaning for the individual or collective that originated them. However, when integrated, they emerge as an inseparable semantic whole that synergistically sustains and gives cohesion to the narrative system as a whole.

   Example: In the narrative *"Creativity and innovation are essential for business success,"* the core could include the following disaggregated propositions:

   - **Proposition 1:** *"Creativity is indispensable for business success."*
   - **Proposition 2:** *"Innovation is fundamental for business success."*
   - **Integrated narrative core:** *"Creativity and innovation are essential for business success."*

   In this case, "creativity" and "innovation" share an unbreakable semantic bond within this narrative system. The integration of these propositions generates a robust and interdependent synergistic core, which, in this case, enables the concept of "business success" to be approached from a multifaceted perspective with much greater depth through a single narrative system.

b. **Interrelated but nuclearly independent propositions:** This occurs when propositions that appear to be part of the same narrative core do not establish a strong synergistic or semantic connection. Although they share a common theme, these propositions do not integrate into a single narrative unit but instead represent distinct yet complementary narratives. In such cases, it becomes crucial to analyze whether these propositions belong to the same narrative system or whether they function as independent narrative cores that interact and relate at a higher level within a broader narrative framework.

   For example, the following propositions:

   - **Proposition 1:** *"Justice is essential to achieving social well-being."*
   - **Proposition 2:** *"Sustainable development is indispensable to ensuring social well-being."*

Although both propositions address *social well-being* as a common theme, they are not integrated into a single synergistic narrative core. Each operates as an autonomous narrative core with complete meaning on its own, but they are interrelated by sharing a general thematic framework (social well-being).

These propositions can interact at a higher level by complementing each other within a broader narrative system, without losing their nuclear semantic independence. For example, a higher-order narrative could be: *"Social well-being is achieved when justice and sustainable development are balanced,"* without implying that the individual propositions depend on each other for understanding or for functioning independently at the narrative level.

c. **Requirements for narrative coherence:** For the core to be consistent within the framework of the TCCR, any set of propositions must meet the following conditions:

   - **Semantic interrelation:** The propositions must possess a logical or thematic connection that justifies their integration into the same core.
   - **Internal consistency:** No contradictions should arise between the propositions.
   - **Structuring function:** The propositions must effectively organize the narrative and articulate the associated premises.

d. **Hermeneutic and functional implications:** The hermeneutic analysis of cores with multiple propositions requires a thorough evaluation of:

   - **Semantic interdependence:** Identifying whether the propositions interact meaningfully to express a coherent and synergistic central idea.
   - **Narrative contribution:** Examining how the propositions configure and strengthen the narrative body, particularly in relation to the premises and arguments that sustain it.

In conclusion, the presence of multiple propositions within the narrative core is conceptually valid, provided that they relate to each other in a complementary manner and contribute to a unified central meaning. If the propositions are independent or generate logical tensions, it becomes necessary to analyze them as separate narratives or to identify a predominant core that integrates the essential elements.

Propositional semantic content

The *propositional semantic content* stands as the central and foundational element within a cognosystemic narrative proposition, defining "what it says" about the perceived

or anticipated reality. This component functions as the conceptual framework that organizes and provides coherence to the narrative, enabling individuals or groups to interpret and structure their experiences based on a shared system of meanings. By establishing the foundations of what is considered true, possible, or relevant, the semantic content shapes the cognitive and structural core of the narrative.

This aspect can also be understood as the set of specific assertions that describe an interpretation of the world or an expectation of how it should be. These assertions not only reflect a subjective understanding of reality but also shape it, guiding individual and collective decisions and behaviors. This element —narrative semantics— is therefore not static; it has the capacity to adapt, transform, or consolidate depending on the experiences and the context in which it operates.

In simple terms, to better clarify this concept, it can be said that, on the one hand, a narrative is basically a story that people use to explain how they see the world or how they believe it should be. Within that story, the *propositional semantic content* is the main idea—what the story says about "reality," whether it is perceived or imagined. It is, in itself, the core of that story, providing it with meaning and organization. This main idea helps individuals make sense of their experiences and decide what is important or true. It functions as a kind of guide or map for interpreting what they experience in everyday life.

Moreover, this main idea is neither fixed nor immutable. It is like a river that can change depending on experiences or surrounding events. It can adjust if something new occurs, transform if people begin to see things differently, or remain the same if it confirms what they already believed. In this way, this idea not only shows how people understand the world but also influences what they do and how they conduct themselves within it.

The semantic content as a dynamic axis

As previously mentioned, one of the most distinctive aspects of semantic content is its intrinsic dynamism, which allows it to integrate with other elements of the narrative system, such as perceptions/emotions, experiences, context, and the epistemic foundation. This capacity for adaptation ensures that narratives remain functional and relevant, even in the face of drastic changes in the environment or individual experiences.

For example, in an educational setting, the narrative proposition "Technology enhances learning" may guide an institution's decisions to integrate digital tools into classrooms. This semantic content is reinforced when students show improved academic performance or greater engagement with interactive activities. However, if the excessive use of technology leads to distractions or reduces personal interactions, the semantic content could be deconstructed and reorganized to include a more balanced perspective, such as "Technology enhances learning when used in a complementary and balanced manner."

Coherence and contextual relevance

The propositional semantic content also depends on its ability to remain coherent and relevant across diverse contexts. This element does not operate in isolation; rather, it continuously interacts with the sociocultural, historical, and political environment, adapting to reflect the specific demands of the context.

In a social context, the narrative "Community participation is essential for sustainable development" can play a central role in rural regions seeking to strengthen their local capacities. This semantic content encourages collective initiatives such as the creation of cooperatives or the organization of local fairs, reinforcing autonomy and a sense of belonging among community members. However, in situations where inequalities in access to resources generate tensions, the semantic content could adjust toward a more balanced assertion, such as "Community participation must be supported by inclusive policies that ensure equity."

The propositional semantic content, consequently, constitutes the central axis of a cognosystemic narrative proposition, acting as the interpretive and structuring core of narratives. Its primary function is to provide a coherent and flexible conceptual framework that guides perceptions and decisions across various contexts. Its adaptive capacity and intrinsic dynamism ensure that narratives remain functional and relevant in the face of environmental challenges and changes. In this sense, semantic content not only reflects reality but also shapes it, configuring how individuals and collectives interpret and act within the world.

Hermeneutics as a tool for narrative semantic reconfiguration

Hermeneutics, understood as the art and science of interpreting meanings, is positioned as a key tool for the deconstruction and reconstruction of semantics within the framework of the cognosystemic narrative. This methodology enables the unraveling of the underlying meanings in narratives, the identification of the symbolic and propositional structures that sustain them, and their reconfiguration to adapt to new realities or contexts. In the TCCR, hermeneutics is not only useful for breaking down narratives into their fundamental components, but also facilitates the reinterpretation and re-signification essential for the adaptability of the Cognosystem.

- **Semantic deconstruction (identifying underlying elements):** Semantic deconstruction involves a deep analysis of narratives to uncover the symbolic, emotional, and contextual structures that give them meaning. This process focuses on questioning implicit assumptions and seemingly fixed meanings, revealing their constructed and contingent nature.

  For example, a workplace narrative such as "Professional success depends exclusively on individual effort" can be deconstructed by analyzing the cultural, historical, and emotional contexts that sustain this proposition. By subjecting this narrative to a hermeneutic interpretation, additional factors—such as unequal opportunities or support systems—can be identified, which complicate and challenge the universality of such a statement. This process of deconstruction opens the space for new interpretations that incorporate a greater plurality of factors.

- **Semantic reconstruction (reinterpretation and resignification):** Semantic reconstruction, as the counterpart to deconstruction, focuses on generating new meanings based on the identified and deconstructed elements. This process involves resignifying the original narratives to align them with emerging needs, values, and contexts.

> Continuing with the previous example, after the deconstruction of the narrative of individual effort, a more inclusive narrative could be reconstructed, such as "Professional success is a process that integrates individual effort, support networks, and contextual opportunities." This reinterpretation not only broadens the understanding of professional success but also offers a more flexible narrative applicable to a variety of experiences and realities.

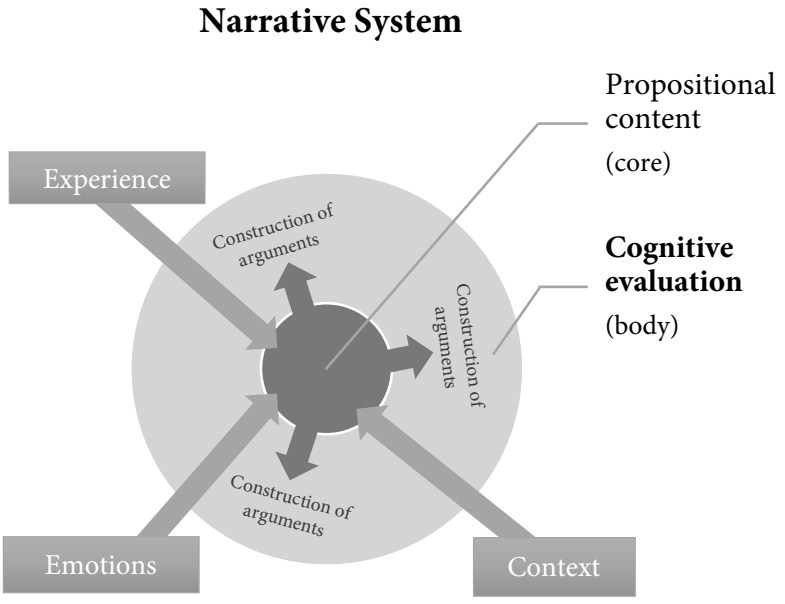
In this sense, hermeneutics emerges as an important tool in the analysis and management of narratives within the Cognosistema. Its ability to deconstruct underlying meanings and reconstruct more inclusive and adaptable narratives positions it as a critical resource for understanding and transforming complex narrative systems.

In general conclusion, *propositional content* constitutes the conceptual anchor of narratives within the Cognosistema, providing them with coherence and direction. This component ensures that narratives remain relevant and functional in a changing environment, allowing for an understanding of how individual and collective beliefs are formed, consolidated, and transformed. By integrating with experiences and adapting to contextual challenges, propositional content reinforces the narrative system's capacity to organize the understanding of the world and to guide human action.

5. Cognitive evaluation

Cognitive evaluation stands as a fundamental pillar in the structure of the narrative system within the TCCR, functioning as the "body" that gives form to the cognosystemic narrative. This process is defined as the comprehensive judgment through which an individual or collective assesses the truthfulness, validity, and relevance of a propositional content. Beyond a purely rational analysis, cognitive evaluation is a complex dynamic where emotional factors, prior experiences, and contextual conditions—previously considered in the formulation of propositional content—converge. Through this process, narratives acquire coherence, consistency, and a profound adaptive capacity, consolidating themselves as complete and complex structures of meaning.

In the TCCR, cognitive evaluation is not limited to a traditional conceptualization of this dynamic as a mere process of accepting or rejecting a belief or a set of beliefs; rather, it is understood as a systemic and reflective process through which individuals contrast the propositional content with their experiences, emotions, and context. This contrast not only validates or challenges a narrative but also enables its consolidation, transformation, or adaptation to new realities. If the propositional content constitutes the initial seed of a narrative, cognitive evaluation functions as the argumentative development that grants it depth and robustness.



In the context of the TCCR, it is necessary to make a conceptual clarification and differentiate between two very important elements: 1) ***"Proposition"***, as an element that is part of the *propositional content*, that is, of the *narrative core*; and ***"Premise"***, as a special type of proposition that belongs to the *narrative body*, participating in the *cognitive evaluation* dynamics that argumentatively support the core.

Proposition: An element that forms part of the *propositional content* or *core* of a narrative system. It is a semantic statement that encapsulates the conceptual essence of the narrative, functioning as its central and organizing axis. The proposition establishes the basic structure of meaning upon which the definitive processes of narrative evaluation and transformation are developed.

Premise: A type of peripheral and underlying proposition that forms part of the *body* of a narrative system, providing the argumentative and cognitive support for the propositional content (core). Premises are the assumptions, values, and arguments—either implicit or explicit—that sustain and justify the main narrative.

Characteristics of the concept of ***"proposition"*** in the TCCR:

a. **Central element:** The proposition acts as the "logical atom" of the narrative system. It is the key idea that organizes and gives meaning to the entire narrative structure.

b. **Evaluability:** The proposition is always subject to evaluation in terms of its truth, applicability, or relevance within a given context.

c. **Relationship with the narrative:** The narrative revolves around the propositional content, which serves as the reference point for analysis, questioning, and reconstruction.

d. **Hermeneutics of semantics:** When working at the level of the core, the proposition is analyzed based on its deepest meaning and internal coherence.

Example: A narrative proposition could be: *"Higher education guarantees professional success."* This is the central statement that will be evaluated, questioned, and eventually transformed.

Characteristics of the Concept of ***"premise"*** in the TCCR:

- **Supportive role:** Premises function as the pillars that uphold the propositional content, explaining the argumentative and contextual foundations of the narrative.

- **Exploration in argumentative dialogue:** Clarifying the premises is a crucial component for uncovering implicit assumptions and potential inconsistencies within the narrative.

- **Relationship with the narrative body:** Premises are essential elements of the narrative body, integrating cognitive evaluations, perspectives, and evidence.

- **Argumentative dialogue:** Premises are analyzed through the contrast of evidence, the integration of perspectives, and critical evaluation to determine their validity and relevance.

Example: In the core narrative proposition *"Higher education guarantees professional success,"* the supporting premises could include:

- **Premise 1:** *"Access to higher education provides greater competitiveness in the job market."*

- **Premise 2:** *"The job market highly values academic degrees."*

These premises must be clarified in order to explore whether they effectively justify

the propositional content or not.

The following is a comparative table that summarizes this differentiation:

Aspect	Proposition (core)	Premises (body)
Definition	Central proposition or statement, part of the narrative's core.	Underlying proposition, part of the narrative body that supports the core.
Role in the narrative	Organizes and structures the narrative.	Supports and justifies the narrative core.
Level of analysis	Hermeneutics of propositional semantics.	Argumentative dialogue.
Example in narrative	Core proposition: *"Higher education guarantees professional success."*	Premise 1: *"Access to higher education provides greater competitiveness in the job market."* Premise 2: *"The job market places high value on academic degrees."*

Dynamics of the cognitive evaluation process

a. **Contrast with experience:** In this context, lived experiences act as the first filter for validating or reformulating a narrative. Within the framework of the TCCR, this contrast involves not only analyzing the central proposition but also the underlying premises that support it. For example, an entrepreneur who upholds the narrative "Perseverance leads to success" will evaluate this proposition and its premises based on the results achieved. If their consistent efforts result in a successful business, the narrative is reinforced and gains stability. However, if they face repeated failures despite their perseverance, they may begin to question an implicit premise such as "The market always rewards effort." This evaluation could lead to a reformulation of both the propositional content and its premises, generating a new narrative: "Perseverance must be accompanied by flexible strategies to achieve success."

b. **Contextual influence:** The sociocultural and political context provides the interpretative framework within which a narrative and its premises are validated or questioned. In this process, cognitive evaluation examines not only the applicability of the propositional content but also the coherence of the premises with external

conditions. For example, in a country with unequal access to employment opportunities, the narrative "Effort is always rewarded" may become destabilized by questioning the premise that "Opportunities are equal for everyone." This questioning could lead to a reinterpretation such as "Effort must be aligned with labor market demands to be effective." This adjustment illustrates how premises interact with context to determine the sustainability of a narrative.

c. **Emotional dimension:** Emotions play a mediating role in cognitive evaluation, intensifying or weakening the judgment regarding a narrative and its premises. Emotions not only influence the perception of propositional content but also affect the acceptance or rejection of the premises that support it. For instance, a person who experiences satisfaction upon receiving recognition for their work is likely to reinforce the narrative that "Effort brings rewards," along with the implicit premise that "The labor system values effort." Conversely, frustration resulting from unacknowledged efforts may trigger a negative evaluation of this premise, leading to both an emotional and cognitive reassessment of the narrative. In such a case, a new narrative might emerge: "Effort must be complemented with visibility strategies to generate recognition."

Positive and negative evaluation

Cognitive evaluation manifests in two main forms, taking into account both the propositional content (core) and the underlying premises (body):

- **Positive evaluation:** When experiences and context confirm both the propositional content and the premises that support it, the narrative is reinforced. This reinforcement entails a comprehensive validation of the narrative and its foundations. For example, an activist who believes in the proposition "Collective action generates social transformations" and observes concrete results, such as the approval of an inclusive policy, will not only consolidate the narrative as a guiding axis for action, but also validate underlying premises such as "Citizen participation influences political decisions" and "Social cohesion is a driving force for change."

- **Negative evaluation:** When experiences contradict the narrative, a dissonance arises that demands an adjustment or transformation of both the propositional content and its underlying premises. In such cases, the narrative may be reformulated to incorporate new evidence or perspectives. For instance, a professional who adopts the narrative "Meritocracy governs career advancement" but consistently perceives favoritism may begin to question premises such as "Workplace decisions are based on objective merit" and "Individual effort guarantees success." This evaluation could lead to a reformulation such as "Meritocracy is important, but it is not always decisive," reflecting a shift in both the core and the body of the narrative.

The integration of premise analysis into both positive and negative evaluation enables a deeper approach, ensuring that reformulated narratives are more coherent, functional, and adaptive in the face of evolving contexts.

Argumentative dialogue as a tool for cognitive evaluation

Argumentative dialogue constitutes a methodology within the process of cognitive evaluation in the cognosystemic narrative system, playing a decisive role in the validation, questioning, and transformation of narratives. From the perspective of the TCCR, this tool is conceived as a rigorous dialogical exchange that fosters critical reflection, incorporates diverse perspectives, and ensures the internal coherence and contextual relevance of narratives in a constantly changing environment.

Argumentative dialogue is defined as an interactive process that explores, analyzes, and reformulates narratives through the contrast of arguments, experiences, and evidence. Its primary objective lies in evaluating the validity and applicability of existing narratives, fostering a deeper and more adaptive understanding in the face of contextual challenges. This approach enables the identification of inconsistencies, the questioning of implicit assumptions, and the generation of more integrative, sophisticated, and functional narratives.

For example, in a discussion on urban development, the narrative "Modernization is synonymous with progress" might be debated within a community facing the construction of a shopping center that threatens to displace small local businesses. Through dialogue, evidence regarding the economic and social impact of gentrification could be introduced, leading to a more balanced reconstructed narrative: "Progress includes both modernization and the preservation of local economies."

Components of argumentative dialogue:

- **Clarification of premises:** This initial step consists of identifying and making explicit, based on the propositional content (core), the underlying premises (body) that support the evaluated narrative. Within the framework of the TCCR, this clarification is essential to ensure that all participants understand the basic assumptions and implicit values that structure the narrative. For example, in the narrative "Technological innovation transforms businesses," the propositional content represents the central assertion, while the underlying premises could include:

    a. The idea that businesses have equitable access to advanced technologies.

    b. The belief that technological adoption automatically improves productivity.

    Clarifying these elements—using methods such as, for example, the semantic hermeneutics of propositional content—allows for a more in-depth and rigorous argumentative analysis.

- **Contrasting evidence:** This component involves introducing data, experiences, and arguments that either support or challenge both the propositional content and the premises that sustain it. In the TCCR, this contrast fosters a robust cognitive evaluation by examining the coherence between the core and the body of the narrative. For example, in a debate on climate change, one group might highlight the benefits of renewable energy as evidence to reinforce the narrative, while another might question an implicit premise such as "Renewable energy is universally accessible," by emphasizing the upfront costs and technological limitations in rural regions.

- **Integration of perspectives:** Dialogical exchange enriches narratives by incorporating complementary or divergent viewpoints, thereby broadening both the applicability of the propositional content and the validity of the premises. This process acknowledges that narratives do not exist in isolation, but rather interact within a system of diverse perspectives. For example, in a discussion on urban transportation policies, integrating perspectives from economics, the environment, and mobility could not only strengthen the sustainability narrative but also adjust premises such as "Sustainability always entails higher costs."

- **Critical evaluation:** At this stage, the internal coherence of the narrative as a whole is analyzed, assessing how the propositional content (core) and the premises (body) respond to the complexities of the context. This analysis allows for the identification of inconsistencies and opportunities for narrative transformation. For example, a narrative such as "Technology solves all educational problems" may become destabilized if an underlying premise like "Access to technology is universal" is questioned. Following this analysis, the narrative could evolve into "Technology is an effective tool if integrated with adapted pedagogical strategies," reflecting a revision of both the core and the body of the narrative.

In conclusion, within the Cognosystem, *cognitive evaluation* functions as a critical feedback mechanism that ensures the internal coherence and adaptability of narratives. This process not only validates existing beliefs but also enables their transformation in response to new evidence, ensuring that narratives evolve in a functional and contextually relevant manner. Moreover, the interaction between cognitive evaluation and other components of the narrative system—such as context and emotions—reinforces its capacity to respond to a constantly changing environment.

Cognitive evaluation, therefore, is the argumentative development that sustains and shapes narratives within the Cognosystem. By integrating experiences, emotions, and context, this process ensures that narratives remain coherent, adaptable, and relevant in the face of real-world challenges.

6. Epistemic attitude

The epistemic attitude is another essential component within the architecture of the cognosystemic narrative system, as it determines the degree of certainty, confidence, and conviction with which a narrative is upheld by an individual or collective. This central element reveals the depth to which a narrative is integrated into a person's cognitive system, influencing their capacity to withstand contradictions, contextual challenges, and new information. In a broader sense, epistemic attitude not only measures the firmness of a belief but also its resilience and the individual's ability to adapt their narratives while maintaining internal coherence in complex and changing environments. This concept, therefore, stands as a key indicator of psychological stability and narrative consistency within the Cognosystem, providing individuals with tools to interpret and respond in a structured manner to external demands.

Nature and spectrum of the epistemic attitude

The epistemic attitude operates along a spectrum that ranges from absolute conviction to continuous doubt and can be differentiated into two clearly defined conceptual poles: *high epistemic attitude* and *low epistemic attitude.*

a. **High epistemic attitude:** At this end of the spectrum, adherence to a narrative is firm and unyielding, implying a high resistance to the revision or modification of that narrative—even in the face of contradictory evidence or adverse contexts. This type of attitude generates significant narrative stability, but it can also lead to cognitive rigidity. For example, a person who holds the belief that "Justice always prevails" might maintain this narrative even in the face of clear injustices, interpreting such events as temporary exceptions that do not disprove the central idea. In the workplace, a manager convinced that "Teamwork always improves outcomes" might ignore evidence of persistent internal conflict, maintaining that such issues are minor or solvable over time.

b. **Low epistemic attitude:** At the opposite end, a low epistemic attitude reflects a greater predisposition toward narrative change, facilitating the incorporation of new information and perspectives. However, this flexibility may expose the individual to increased cognitive uncertainty or a lack of internal coherence. For example, a person who initially believes in the narrative "Effort always leads to success" might, after repeated negative experiences, reinterpret the narrative as "Success depends on multiple factors beyond effort," continuously adjusting their beliefs based on the immediate context. Similarly, a community leader who frequently changes their stance on public policies in response to external pressures may be perceived as inconsistent, even though such flexibility allows for rapid adaptation to new realities.

This spectrum, in which high and low epistemic attitudes (and their evident intermediate levels) coexist, is also influenced by contextual, emotional, and social factors that shape the interpretation of experiences and the construction of beliefs. Recognizing these

differences is crucial to understanding how narratives are maintained or evolve within the Cognosystem.

Contextual and relational dimensions

The epistemic attitude is also deeply shaped by contextual and social factors that define the conditions under which a narrative is upheld or transformed:

- **Cultural context:** For example, in societies where meritocracy is a predominant value, narratives such as "Effort leads to success" are more likely to be upheld with a high epistemic attitude. In educational systems that consistently reward high-achieving students, the narrative of effort being rewarded may become solidified. In contrast, in contexts where success is perceived as dependent on social connections or inherited privilege, the epistemic attitude toward effort may weaken.

- **Social influence:** Interpersonal relationships also play a crucial role in modulating the epistemic attitude. For example, a scientist who receives recognition for their research may reinforce their narrative about the importance of hard work and perseverance, whereas a researcher whose findings are ignored or dismissed may experience a decline in confidence toward that same narrative.

- **Accumulated evidence:** Past experiences also play a fundamental role in shaping the epistemic attitude. For example, an athlete who observes consistent improvements in performance through training may develop a deeper conviction in the narrative of effort, whereas someone who experiences inconsistent results may adopt a more skeptical stance.

Implications and applications

The epistemic attitude has significant implications for both the stability and adaptability of narratives within the Cognosystem:

- **Narrative resilience:** A high epistemic attitude reinforces individuals' ability to persist in their goals, even when facing adverse circumstances. However, it can also lead to rigidity that limits the capacity to integrate new evidence or adapt to contextual changes. For example, a social activist firmly committed to a cause may overlook opportunities to collaborate with groups of differing ideologies due to an unyielding adherence to their narrative.

- **Adaptive flexibility:** A low epistemic attitude fosters individuals' ability to adjust their narratives in response to new information or experiences. This is evident in community leaders who adapt their messages and strategies according to the emerging needs of their communities, although such flexibility may also be perceived as a lack of consistency.

- **Cognosystem coherence:** A balance between high and low epistemic attitude is essential to maintain the stability of the narrative system while preserving its capacity for evolution. This balance allows both individual and collective narratives to adjust without losing their core structure, as seen in organizational change processes where the initial vision is adapted to address new challenges without abandoning its primary purpose.

In conclusion, the epistemic attitude constitutes a relevant axis in the configuration and evaluation of narratives within the Cognosystem. By influencing the depth to which a narrative is integrated into the cognitive system, this component determines both the capacity for resistance to challenges and the openness to change. A rigorous analysis of the epistemic attitude enables the design of interventions that promote both the stability and adaptability of narratives, ensuring their relevance and functionality in dynamic and complex environments.

7. Narrative purpose

Narrative purpose constitutes a central element within the cognosystemic narrative system, defining the underlying intention that provides direction, meaning, and coherence to the narratives that shape how individuals and collectives understand the world. This component, whether conscious or implicit, functions as the driving force behind the adoption, perpetuation, or transformation of a narrative, directly influencing the decisions, behaviors, and interpretive patterns of those who sustain it. Purpose not only organizes existing narratives but also guides them toward specific goals, adapting them to complex and dynamic contexts.

For example, in the case of a young migrant, the narrative "Hard work will allow me to build a new life" may serve as a meaningful axis that drives them to face the challenges of integrating into an unfamiliar culture. This purpose, beyond being a mere emotional motivator, provides an interpretive framework for processing experiences such as discrimination, labor precariousness, or cultural alienation, enabling the individual to reinterpret these difficulties as steps toward a greater goal.

The nature and functions of narrative purpose

Narrative purpose is configured as an organizing mechanism that emerges from the interaction between individuals' experiences, perceptions, and emotions, providing structure and direction to the narratives that guide their actions. This component fulfills several essential functions within the cognosystemic narrative system, among which the following stand out:

- **Generating motivation:** Purpose infuses narratives with energy and direction, enabling individuals to act consistently with their goals. A student who holds the narrative "Education is the key to changing my destiny" finds in this purpose the strength to persist in the face of academic or economic difficulties. Each partial

success—such as passing an exam or receiving a scholarship—reinforces this narrative, reaffirming its validity and sustaining motivation.

- **Fostering resilience:** Purpose functions as an anchor that sustains the narrative even in adverse situations. For example, a community affected by a natural disaster may structure its narrative around "Together we will rebuild our home," with the purpose of restoring unity and hope. This purpose not only fosters cooperation among community members but also enables them to reinterpret the tragedy as an opportunity to strengthen their bonds and collective identity.

- **Consolidating identity:** Purpose also serves as an essential component in the formation and maintenance of personal or group identity. An environmental activist who sustains the narrative "Protecting the planet is my responsibility" finds in this purpose a reason for being that structures their identity and motivates action—from their personal sphere to engagement in global communities.

Manifestations of purpose in different contexts

Narrative purpose, as a central element in the configuration of the Cognosystem, manifests in diverse ways depending on the specific contexts in which it operates. These manifestations reflect how narratives, driven by clear purposes, guide the actions and decisions of individuals and collectives across varied settings—from educational to organizational—adapting to the unique dynamics and challenges of each environment:

- **Educational context:** In the school setting, a teacher who adopts the narrative "Every student has unlimited potential" structures their purpose around inspiring and building confidence in their students. Each student's achievement reinforces this narrative, while challenges are interpreted as opportunities to improve pedagogical strategies. On the other hand, a student who believes that "Knowledge transforms lives" uses this purpose not only as a guide to persevere in their studies but also as a tool to challenge the inequalities they observe in their social environment.

- **Family context:** A parent who holds the narrative "My home is my greatest strength" uses this purpose to balance work and family responsibilities, creating an emotionally safe space for their children. This purpose motivates them to cultivate meaningful relationships, transforming every shared moment at home into a concrete expression of their narrative. In contrast, a teenager who adopts the narrative "I will be a role model for my younger siblings" finds in this purpose a reason to develop responsible habits, validating the narrative through their daily actions.

- **Organizational context:** In an organization undergoing change, leaders who promote the narrative "Interdepartmental collaboration is our strength" align this purpose with the development of strategies that foster effective communication among teams. This approach transforms internal dynamics, promoting not only

operational efficiency but also a shared sense of belonging among employees. In another case, in nonprofit organizations, the narrative "Every small action makes a difference" may structure the purpose of volunteers, providing them with a sense of mission that transcends everyday challenges.

Implications and relevance of purpose in the Cognosystem

Purpose, as a fundamental component of the Cognosystem, transcends its role as a mere guide for narratives to become a decisive factor in the capacity of narrative systems to adapt, evolve, and maintain coherence. Its implications range from narrative stability to resilience in adverse contexts, establishing it as a central axis in the cognitive and psychosocial processes underlying the construction of meaning. This analysis is broken down into three key dimensions:

a. **Narrative stability:** A clear purpose acts as a stabilizer of the narrative, enabling individuals to maintain interpretive coherence in the face of adverse or contradictory events. This ensures that narratives remain functional and aligned with individual or collective goals.

b. **Adaptability and evolution:** As contexts change and new experiences emerge, purpose allows narratives to be adjusted without compromising their core coherence. For example, a person who initially holds the belief "Professional success is my top priority" may evolve toward "Balancing my personal and professional life is essential," adapting to new circumstances without losing their sense of direction.

c. **Psychosocial resilience:** In times of crisis, purpose functions as a key resource for sustaining hope and commitment. An organization that adopts the narrative "Our work transforms lives" finds in this purpose a renewed source of energy to overcome logistical and financial challenges, preserving internal cohesion and external impact.

In summary, purpose within the cognosystemic narrative system constitutes an essential axis that organizes, guides, and provides meaning to narratives. Its capacity to influence the stability, resilience, and adaptability of the Cognosystem makes it a fundamental component for understanding how individuals and collectives interpret and respond to their contexts. Analyzing narrative purpose allows for the design of strategies that strengthen its relevance and coherence, ensuring that narratives remain functional and aligned with goals and values in increasingly complex and challenging environments.

8. Narrative function

Finally, as the last element in the structure of the cognosystemic narrative system, we find the *narrative function*. According to the TCCR, it constitutes the operational axis of this type of system, playing a fundamental role in translating abstract meanings into concrete actions that shape individual and collective experiences, decisions, and behaviors.

This dynamic component allows narratives to transcend the conceptual realm and become active tools for facing challenges, adapting to contextual changes, and building internal coherence in complex environments.

By acting as a bridge between the abstract and the practical, the narrative function ensures that the Cognosystem maintains its relevance, flexibility, and effectiveness, allowing narratives to evolve and adjust to the demands of a constantly changing world. This component not only organizes individual responses to events but also strengthens social cohesion by providing shared frameworks for action. In this sense, the narrative function stands as an essential pillar that energizes the interaction between "meaning" and "action," ensuring that narratives can operate as drivers of continuous transformation at all levels of the Cognosystem.

Conceptualization of the narrative function

The narrative function operates as an integrative mechanism that connects the internal values, beliefs, and purposes of a narrative with the external demands imposed by "reality," allowing narratives to act as transformative agents in both personal and social domains. This process not only facilitates the explanation of the world from a narrative perspective but also structures the ways in which individuals and groups interact with their environment. By serving as a guide for translating abstract ideas into concrete actions, the narrative function fosters not only internal coherence and psychological stability but also contributes to generating social cohesion and effective adaptation strategies in the face of complex and changing scenarios. This component manifests as an essential bridge between meaning and action, endowing the Cognosystem with a dynamic capacity to integrate, reinterpret, and mobilize narratives to face challenges in a sustainable and resilient way.

In this context, four essential dimensions of the narrative function are identified, allowing for a deeper understanding of its impact:

a. **Psychosocial structuring mechanism:** Narrative provides an organizational framework that structures both individual experiences and collective dynamics. For example, a community leader who adopts the narrative "Working together produces lasting results" organizes collaborative activities such as building shared spaces or implementing training workshops. This narrative not only guides their actions but also strengthens the bonds among community members, transforming collective effort into a driver of development and resilience.

b. **Generation of coherence and stability:** The narrative function acts as a psychological and social stabilizer, helping individuals maintain a sense of coherence in the face of uncertainty and change. An entrepreneur who sustains the narrative "Every obstacle is an opportunity to innovate" reinterprets the initial failures of their business as necessary stages to refine their strategy. This narrative not only helps maintain motivation but also reduces anxiety, providing a psychological structure that supports resilient decision-making.

c. **Facilitation of adaptation to changing contexts:** Narratives enable individuals and collectives to adjust to shifting environments by redefining goals and priorities. For example, a team of rescuers in a region affected by natural disasters that adopts the narrative "Every life matters" prioritizes strategic actions to maximize available resources and coordinate efforts. This narrative translates core values into operational strategies that help overcome logistical and practical challenges.

d. **Articulation of purpose and action:** The narrative function connects the general purpose of a narrative with the specific actions that reinforce its validity and sustainability. A teacher who believes that "Education transforms lives" designs pedagogical activities that promote critical thinking and community engagement. These tangible actions not only validate the narrative but also generate a positive impact on their students, consolidating the narrative as a transformative tool.

Relevance of the narrative function in the Cognosystem

The narrative function is essential to the operability and sustainability of the Cognosystem, allowing narratives to transcend the realm of abstract ideas and become drivers of action and transformation. Its importance can be observed across several fundamental dimensions:

- **Connection between meaning and action:** The narrative function ensures that abstract ideas are translated into tangible and effective behaviors. For example, an environmental organization that adopts the narrative "Nature is our home" implements reforestation campaigns, develops educational programs, and promotes sustainable policies—demonstrating how a well-articulated narrative can generate concrete and impactful results.

- **Flexibility and adaptability of the system:** By endowing the Cognosystem with resilience, the narrative function allows narratives to adjust to contextual changes without compromising their core coherence. A company that believes "Change is an opportunity for growth" can reconfigure its internal processes and business models in response to economic crises, strengthening its competitiveness while preserving its essential identity.

- **Cohesion and coordinated action:** In group contexts, the narrative function organizes collective efforts toward common goals. A social movement that sustains the narrative "Dignity is a universal right" aligns its activities around peaceful protests, awareness campaigns, and legislative proposals, generating significant impact in public opinion and the political spherea.

Integrated examples of the narrative function

The following integrated examples concretely illustrate how narratives, when operating in diverse contexts, connect abstract meanings with concrete actions, guiding behaviors and reinforcing both individual and collective cohesion:

- **Educational context:** A teacher in a marginalized urban environment who adopts the narrative *"Creativity is key to overcoming limitations"* introduces artistic activities that utilize recycled materials. This approach not only stimulates innovative thinking among students but also teaches them to face challenges with limited resources, reinforcing the narrative that creative solutions can transform their surroundings.

Narrative	Function	Resulting actions
"Creativity is key to overcoming limitations."	Fostering resilience and problem-solving skills through the development of creativity in resource-limited contexts.	- Introduce artistic activities using recycled materials. - Design projects that stimulate innovative thinking among students. - Etc.

- **Family context:** A father who believes in the narrative *"Curiosity fuels learning"* organizes scientific exploration nights at home, using homemade experiments such as building a baking soda volcano or observing the stars with improvised telescopes. These activities not only strengthen family bonds but also spark in his children a lasting interest in knowledge.

Narrative	Function	Resulting actions
"Curiosity fuels learning."	Fostering interest in lifelong learning and strengthening family bonds through shared educational experiences.	- Organize scientific exploration nights at home. - Conduct homemade experiments such as building a baking soda volcano or observing the stars with improvised telescopes. - Etc.

- **Organizational context:** A startup that upholds the narrative *"Diversity drives innovation"* hires multicultural and multidisciplinary teams to address complex problems. The narrative is reinforced when creative solutions emerge from the collaboration among individuals with diverse perspectives, consolidating an inclusive and effective work environment.

Narrative	Function	Resulting actions
"Diversity drives innovation."	Promoting innovative solutions through the integration of diverse perspectives, consolidating an inclusive and efficient work environment.	- Hire multicultural and multidisciplinary teams to address complex problems. - Encourage collaboration among individuals with different perspectives. - Etc.

- **Sports context:** A youth chess team that adopts the narrative *"Every move counts"* dedicates sessions to analyzing historical games and learning from past mistakes. This approach not only improves their competitive performance but also instills a strategic mindset that players apply both in the sport and in their daily lives.

Narrative	Function	Resulting actions
"Every move counts."	Stimulating a strategic mindset that enhances competitive performance and applies to decision-making in various areas of life.	- Dedicate sessions to analyzing historical games. - Reflect on and learn from past mistakes. - Etc.

In conclusion, the *narrative function* is the key component that ensures narratives operate as engines of action and transformation within the Cognosystem. Its capacity to structure behavior, stabilize emotions, and promote collective action guarantees that the cognosystemic narrative system maintains its relevance, flexibility, and effectiveness. Identifying, understanding, and optimizing the narrative function is essential for designing resilient and adaptive systems capable of responding to the complexities of an increasingly challenging world.

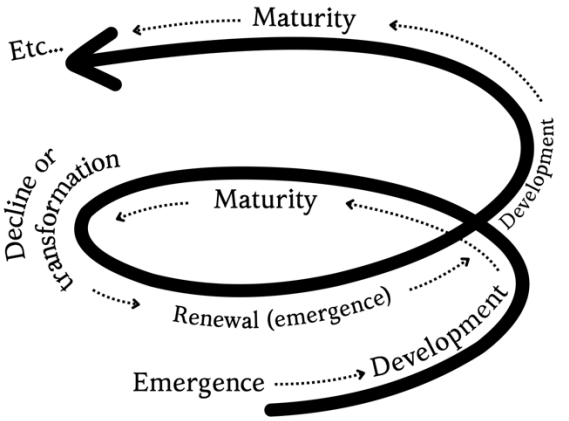
IV. The life cycle of narrative systems

The life cycle of cognosystemic narrative systems constitutes a highly significant theoretical element within the TCCR, as it explores the evolution of narratives from their origin to their transformation and restructuring. This cycle makes it possible to understand the internal dynamics of the Cognosystem by analyzing how narratives emerge in response to human experiences, consolidate through processes of social interaction, reach a stage of maturity in which they significantly impact individual and collective structures, and ultimately transform in order to adapt to changing contexts.

These phases are identified in the TCCR through five evolutionary stages:

1. Emergence.
2. Development.
3. Maturity.
4. Decline or transformation.
5. Renewal.

This process can be represented as a spiral-shaped cycle, in which the renewal of a narrative marks the beginning of a new cycle, reflecting the evolutionary and resilient nature of narrative systems.



Each stage is a complex interaction between meanings, practices, and sociocultural realities, highlighting the central role of narratives as tools for structuring human experience and guiding action.

1. Narrative emergence stage

The emergence of a narrative constitutes the initial moment in which an individual, group, organization, or culture begins to structure a set of experiences, perceptions, values, and beliefs into a coherent account that gives meaning to their reality. This process, deeply rooted in the cognitive nature of human beings, responds to the universal need to organize perceived chaos and construct meanings that guide behavior and decision-making. The emergence of a narrative not only organizes experience but also acts as an adaptive tool in the face of change, crisis, or transformation in the environment. Its form and content are intrinsically shaped by the ecosystemic levels in which it arises, as well as by the contextual factors that motivate it.

a. **Microsystems: Narratives at the individual level:** At the individual level, narratives emerge as responses to significant experiences that challenge preexisting beliefs or introduce new perspectives. This level is particularly sensitive to internal changes and immediate interactions with the environment. For example, a person facing an unexpected medical diagnosis might develop the narrative "Each day is a gift that must not be wasted," structuring their life around a renewed appreciation for time and personal relationships. This narrative not only allows the person to reinterpret their situation but also channels their energy toward actions that prioritize their well-being and that of their loved ones. In this context, individual narratives function as reference frameworks that reorganize identity and facilitate adaptation to new circumstances.

b. **Mesosystems: Narratives in family and group contexts:** In mesosystems, narrative emergence is closely linked to shared experiences that reconfigure the internal dynamics of a group. These narratives provide cohesion and direction, serving as collective guides for confronting significant events. For example, in a community facing the threat of displacement due to an urban development project, the narrative "Our story is not for sale" may emerge. This narrative unifies group members, motivating them to organize protests, establish alliances with human rights organizations, and preserve their cultural identity. Similarly, a family welcoming back a member after a long absence might construct the narrative "Family always comes first," reinforcing emotional bonds and guiding their actions toward the rebuilding of relationships. In both cases, emerging narratives act as catalysts for unity and resistance.

c. **Exosystems and macrosystems: Organizational and cultural narratives:** In exosystems and macrosystems, the emergence of narratives reflects the interactions among social, economic, and political forces that affect broad communities. These narratives are essential for responding to structural changes and for articulating collective identities. For example, an international organization working in conflict zones may develop the narrative "Peace is a joint effort," mobilizing resources and people around reconciliation and development initiatives. This narrative not only reinforces organizational identity but also establishes a framework of legitimacy and international collaboration. In the cultural sphere, climate justice movements have generated narratives such as "The planet is our shared responsibility," which have transformed political discourse, business practices, and individual attitudes toward sustainability.

Interconnected dynamics in the emergence stage

The emergence of narratives is not an isolated phenomenon; individual, group, and cultural narratives interact in a continuous process of feedback and co-creation. For example, the personal narrative of a social entrepreneur who believes "Change begins with an idea" may resonate with a global movement promoting "Think big, act small," generat-

ing synergies that strengthen both individual actions and collective efforts. This interweaving highlights the importance of understanding narrative emergence as a relational phenomenon, deeply contextualized within the Cognosystem.

In conclusion, the emergence of a narrative is a fundamental process that reveals the human capacity to reinterpret the environment and adapt to the demands of a changing reality. Analyzing this phenomenon across different ecosystemic levels makes it possible to identify patterns and strategies that support effective intervention in its formation, promoting meaningful transformations in individuals, groups, and societies. A deep understanding of these dynamics not only enriches the theoretical framework but also opens up possibilities for designing narrative interventions capable of driving sustainable and positive long-term change.

2. Narrative development stage

Development constitutes an essential phase in the life cycle of narrative systems, during which narratives evolve from an embryonic state into a more refined, consolidated, and functional structure. This process is characterized by constant feedback among lived experiences, social interactions, and the gradual adaptation to the contexts in which the narratives unfold. In this stage, narratives not only acquire internal coherence but also become legitimized as behavioral and symbolic guides for individuals and collectives. Social validation and expansion across different levels of the Cognosystem are key processes that enable narratives to consolidate as interpretive frameworks of reality, facilitating both cohesion and adaptation in the face of a changing environment.

a. **Microsystems: Consolidation of personal narratives:** In microsystems, the development of a narrative is intrinsically linked to identity construction and the integration of personal meanings. This process involves balancing the validation of initial beliefs with their adaptation in light of new experiences. For example, a young woman who adopts the narrative "Effort turns dreams into reality" may reinforce this belief through academic and professional achievements, such as receiving a scholarship or gaining recognition in her field of study. These milestones strengthen the narrative through positive feedback, while isolated failures—such as missing out on a job opportunity—may be reinterpreted within the narrative framework as necessary lessons for future success. This dynamism allows the narrative to evolve without losing its core coherence.

b. **Mesosystems: Development of shared narratives:** In the realm of mesosystems, narrative development manifests through interactions among individuals within family, educational, or community groups. This level is crucial for the consolidation of shared beliefs that foster cohesion and a sense of belonging. For example, a family facing an economic crisis may develop the narrative "Our unity makes us strong," reinforcing it through practices such as collaborating on family projects, reducing expenses, or celebrating small collective achievements. Similarly, a group of students working on an environmental project might adopt the narrative "Every

action counts to save the planet," consolidating it as they observe the positive impacts of their initiatives in the community, such as reduced waste or tree planting. These shared experiences reinforce the underlying values of the narrative, ensuring its relevance and continuity.

c. **Exosystems and macrosystems: Expansion and legitimization of collective narratives:** In exosystems and macrosystems, narrative development acquires an organizational and cultural dimension, consolidating through policies, practices, and traditions that reinforce its impact at a collective level. For example, a social enterprise that upholds the narrative "Change begins in communities" may develop it through local impact programs that involve communities in decision-making and the implementation of sustainable projects. This process not only reinforces the narrative but also validates it through tangible outcomes that build trust among communities and other stakeholders. In the cultural sphere, narratives such as "Diversity enriches us" may be consolidated through the promotion of intercultural festivals, inclusive public policies, and artistic representations that celebrate plurality. These elements strengthen the narrative by integrating it into shared values and practices, ensuring its legitimacy in global contexts.

Feedback dynamics in narrative development

The development of narratives does not occur in isolation; it is driven by a continuous feedback process among the various ecosystemic levels. For example, a community leader who adopts the narrative "Unity is strength" may collaborate with a national organization promoting "Collective action transforms societies," generating a synergy that strengthens both narratives. These types of interactions not only validate existing narratives but also stimulate their evolution, incorporating new meanings that make them more inclusive and resilient in the face of contemporary challenges.

In summary, the development of a narrative is a critical stage that determines its capacity to influence the actions, values, and decisions of the individuals and collectives who sustain it. Understanding the specific dynamics of this phase allows for the identification of intervention points that can enhance its impact and ensure its relevance in a world characterized by diversity and constant change.

3. Narrative maturity stage

The narrative maturity stage constitutes a phase of consolidation and stability in which the narrative becomes deeply integrated into the identity of the individual or group that sustains it, gaining relevance and legitimacy as a fundamental interpretive framework. At this stage, the narrative system transcends the initial levels of validation and becomes a structuring principle that guides decisions, actions, and values. This process not only ensures internal coherence for the individuals or collectives who adopt the narrative but also allows it to function as an axis of cohesion and adaptation in the face of contextual changes. Mature narratives have the potential to become tools for social transformation, particularly when they challenge oppressive paradigms or promote inclusive and democratic principles.

- **Microsystems: Maturity of the personal narrative:** At the individual level, narrative maturity is reached when the narrative becomes a central axis of personal identity, functioning as a stable filter that organizes experiences and decisions. This state of maturity implies that the narrative has been evaluated, adjusted, and reinforced through repeated experiences that validate it and deeply integrate it into the individual's belief system.

  For example, a scientist who upholds the narrative "Curiosity drives knowledge" may have strengthened this belief through a continuous process of discoveries, failures, and learning. The mature narrative becomes a guide for facing academic and professional challenges, reinforced with each significant finding or recognized publication. Similarly, a farmer who adopts the narrative "Caring for the soil ensures the future" reinforces this idea by observing the tangible benefits of sustainable practices in their crops, consolidating the narrative as a guiding principle in their relationship with the environment.

- **Mesosystems: Mature narratives in groups and communities:** In mesosystems, narrative maturity is observed when a narrative is collectively accepted as a shared frame of reference that guides action and reinforces cohesion within the group. Mature narratives in this context are often passed down across generations or consolidated through shared experiences that reinforce their relevance and legitimacy.

  For example, a community that adopts the narrative "Collaboration makes us resilient" may have consolidated it through successful collective responses to natural disasters. Each joint action—such as building community shelters or managing resources collaboratively—reinforces the narrative, which in turn strengthens group identity and mutual trust. Similarly, a group of urban artists who sustain the narrative "Art transforms realities" may consolidate it as they observe how their community murals generate positive changes in the perception of their neighborhood, reinforcing the group's commitment to this vision.

- **Exosystems and macrosystems: Consolidation in organizational and cultural structures:** At the levels of exosystems and macrosystems, mature narratives are reflected in established traditions, widely accepted cultural norms, and institutionalized policies that reinforce their relevance. These narratives acquire structural significance and become integrated into collective practices and values, serving as normative axes that guide social action.

  An organizational example could be a multinational corporation that upholds the narrative "Sustainability is the path to prosperity," consolidated through the implementation of initiatives such as circular economy practices, investment in clean energy, and environmental education for its employees. This narrative is reflected not only in its internal policies but also in its influence on the global market, inspiring other companies to adopt similar models. In the cultural realm, a society that embraces the narrative "Equality strengthens our democracy" may consolidate it through inclusive legislation, diverse media representations, and the celebration of symbolic dates that reinforce these values. The mature narrative becomes a structuring framework that shapes collective identity and facilitates progressive change toward a more equitable society.

Relevance of narrative maturity

The maturity of a narrative marks a culminating point in its life cycle, in which it reaches a level of stability that allows it to exert sustainable and meaningful influence on the systems that adopt it. At this stage, the narrative not only provides coherence and direction but also functions as a powerful tool for articulating shared values, facilitating adaptation to new challenges, and unifying diverse identities. Although mature narratives may face pressures from emerging realities or contextual changes, their ability to evolve without losing their fundamental essence ensures their continued relevance. Understanding this stage is crucial for identifying strategies that enhance their positive impact, ensuring that they remain drivers of change and pillars of stability in an environment characterized by growing complexity and diversity.

4. Narrative decline or transformation stage

Narratives are not eternal; their relevance and functionality are intrinsically tied to the contexts in which they operate. In this sense, they may enter a stage of decline or undergo transformation when they no longer respond to the demands of the environment or cease to provide coherence and direction to the systems that uphold them—in other words, when they enter a phase of entropy. This process, both natural and necessary, can unfold gradually, through the progressive erosion of their validity, or abruptly, in response to critical events that challenge their relevance. A narrative in decline is often questioned, challenged, and eventually replaced by others that align more closely with emerging realities. Within this framework, the Cognosystem—as a suprasystemic space—plays a crucial role by constantly adapting to integrate new narratives that restore its functionality and relevance. Moreover, this process reflects the cyclical, dynamic, and evolutionary nature of the Cognosystem itself, where the end of one narrative marks the continuous beginning of another, again and again—whether through transformation or complete renewal.

- **Microsystems: Decline and transformation in personal narratives:** At the individual level, the decline of a narrative arises when new experiences challenge the coherence of the personal story, generating cognitive and emotional tension. This process may lead to an identity crisis, forcing the individual to deeply reassess the core beliefs that guide their life and to reformulate them in order to integrate newly perceived realities.

  For example, a professional who upholds the narrative "Hard work always leads to success" may experience a narrative crisis after years of dedication without satisfactory results, or upon observing others achieve success through external factors such as networking. This decline may catalyze the evolution toward a reformulated narrative, such as "Success requires both effort and smart strategies." In this case, the original narrative is not entirely abandoned but adapted to reflect a more nuanced and functional understanding of the circumstances.

  Similarly, a person raised with the narrative "Family is always a safe haven" may reevaluate it after experiencing conflict or lack of support within their family environment. The decline of this narrative may give way to a transformation that

broadens their perspective, such as "Emotional security can be found in a variety of relationships," recognizing the value of alternative bonds and diversifying sources of support.

- **Mesosystems: Narrative changes in groups and families:** In mesosystems, group or family narratives may enter a stage of decline when traditional norms or values no longer meet the needs of their members. This process often manifests through internal conflicts, generational tensions, or the introduction of new perspectives that challenge existing structures.

  For example, a family that upholds the narrative "The authority of elders must never be questioned" may face significant tensions when younger generations begin to demand greater autonomy and participation in decision-making. This narrative decline could give rise to a new narrative that balances respect for experience with the inclusion of younger voices, such as "The wisdom of elders is valuable, but decisions should be shared."

  In a work team, a narrative like "Internal competition drives success" may lose relevance if it leads to distrust and tension among members. In this context, a transformed narrative might emerge, such as "Collaboration makes us stronger," promoting a cooperative approach that better responds to collective needs. This change not only enhances group cohesion but also supports a more equitable and sustainable organizational culture.

- **Exosystems and macrosystems: Narrative transformations in organizations and cultures:** At the organizational and cultural levels, narratives may enter into decline when economic crises, social changes, or technological advancements alter the traditional structures that sustain them. These transformations are often more visible due to their systemic impact and the involvement of diverse actors, which accelerate the processes of questioning and renewal.

  For example, a company operating under the narrative "Mass production guarantees success" may face a significant crisis when consumers begin to value sustainability and personalization. This decline could drive a narrative transformation toward "Sustainable innovation is key to the future," resulting in profound changes to business strategies, production processes, and business models. This narrative shift not only redefines the organization's internal priorities but also influences market trends and public perception.

  In the cultural sphere, narratives such as "Tradition secures our identity" have begun to decline in the face of global movements that promote diversity and adaptability. For instance, in communities that have historically resisted cultural change, a transformative narrative such as "Tradition is strengthened through integration with diversity" is taking hold. This emerging narrative reflects an effort to preserve historical values while adapting to the demands of an interconnected world. It is driven by local initiatives that promote intercultural dialogue and by the growing recognition that diversity is a valuable asset in building resilient identities.

Relevance of narrative decline and transformation

The decline and transformation of narrative systems represent essential phases for ensuring the adaptability and relevance of the Cognosystem, from micro to macro levels. These dynamics allow narratives to evolve in response to new challenges and contexts, preventing individual and collective systems from becoming trapped in dysfunctional or outdated narratives. This process is fundamental to maintaining the vitality of the Cognosystem, as it prevents the ossification of obsolete narratives and fosters continual renewal. Moreover, recognizing the cyclical nature of narrative systems underscores how each decline paves the way for regeneration, ensuring that narratives remain relevant and cohesive in a constantly changing environment. A deep understanding of this process not only allows for the identification of intervention opportunities but also facilitates the transition toward more inclusive, functional, and sustainable narratives, guaranteeing the resilience and adaptability of social systems as a whole.

5. Narrative renewal stage

Finally, narrative renewal constitutes a fundamental stage in the life cycle of narrative systems according to the TCCR. This phase is characterized by the revitalization of existing narratives through the incorporation of new elements that adapt them to ever-changing contexts, or by their replacement with entirely new narratives that better meet the needs of the environment. Far from being a simple substitution process, narrative renewal involves deep reflection, reinterpretation, and reconfiguration that ensure the functionality and relevance of the Cognosystem. This process also highlights the intrinsic capacity of narrative systems to regenerate and remain cohesive in the face of uncertainty, promoting sustained adaptability and continuous innovation.

- **Microsystems: Renewal in personal narratives:** At the individual level, narrative renewal is an introspective and evolutionary process that enables people to integrate new experiences, learnings, and emotions into their personal narratives. This process facilitates the reconfiguration of identities, values, and beliefs, achieving greater coherence with current circumstances and strengthening future adaptability. For example, an athlete who upheld the narrative "Innate talent is the key to success" might face a series of defeats that lead them to reassess their perspective. After reflecting on their dedication and training, their narrative could shift to "Effort and discipline are essential to achieving success," allowing them to renew their motivation and focus.

  Similarly, a writer might renew their narrative after going through a period of creative block. If they previously believed that "Inspiration comes spontaneously," they might develop a more constructive narrative such as "Creativity is a process cultivated through consistent practice." This change not only affects their work approach but also redefines their perception of art and creativity.

- **Mesosystems: Renewal in families and groups:** In mesosystems, narrative renewal plays a fundamental role in maintaining the cohesion and functionality of families and groups within an ever-changing environment. This process involves adapting norms, values, and modes of interaction to reflect emerging needs and collective challenges. For example, a family that upheld the narrative "The father is the main provider" may undergo renewal when facing socioeconomic changes that require both parents to work outside the home. In this context, the narrative could evolve into "Responsibility is shared, both at work and at home," promoting equity and adaptability.

  In a youth sports team, the narrative "Victory is the ultimate goal" may be renewed after a series of consecutive losses. Through collective reflection, the team could adopt a new narrative such as "Learning and effort are the foundation of future success," which not only improves group morale but also redefines internal strategies and relationships.

- **Exosystems and macrosystems: Renewal in organizations and cultures:** At the organizational and cultural levels, narrative renewal is vital for ensuring sustainability and relevance in a globalized and constantly evolving environment. This process may involve the revision of traditions, institutional practices, and core values that have become outdated. For example, a company that previously operated under the narrative "Efficiency is our highest priority" might adopt a renewed narrative such as "Sustainability and innovation drive our long-term success." This shift not only reconfigures its internal practices but also enhances its relationship with customers and strengthens its corporate reputation.

  Culturally, narrative renewal can be observed in societies that reassess their traditional economic models. For instance, an agricultural community that for generations upheld the narrative "Traditional farming ensures food security" may face significant challenges due to climate change and soil degradation. In response, the community may adopt a renewed narrative such as "Sustainable agricultural innovation secures our food future," promoting the implementation of eco-efficient technologies and regenerative farming practices. This change not only transforms agricultural methods but also redefines the community's relationship with the environment and global markets.

Relevance of narrative renewal

Narrative renewal is an essential process for the resilience and adaptability of narrative systems within the Cognosystem. This mechanism not only enables the reinterpretation and transformation of existing narratives but also ensures that these complex systems remain relevant and functional in a constantly evolving context. By fostering creativity, inclusion, and sustainability, narrative renewal provides a solid foundation for personal, group, and cultural development. Recognizing and facilitating this process is crucial to ensure that narratives align with contemporary values and future demands, thus promoting the transformation toward more flexible, equitable, and change-oriented systems. In this way, narrative renewal becomes a fundamental pillar for the continuous evolution of the Cognosystem.

General conclusion on the life cycle of narrative systems

The life cycle of cognosystemic narrative systems—comprising five interdependent stages according to the TCCR: emergence, development, maturity, decline or transformation, and renewal—represents an integral and innovative element of this theory, which explains the evolutionary dynamics of narratives within the framework of the Cognosystem. This cycle offers a conceptual framework that not only enables an understanding of the adaptive and multifaceted nature of narratives, but also examines how they are shaped, consolidated, and transformed in response to the historical, cultural, and social contexts in which they operate. Each stage reflects the ongoing process through which narratives give meaning to human experience and shape the complex interactions among individuals, groups, and systemic structures.

Understanding the life cycle as a sequence of interconnected stages highlights the capacity of narratives to evolve, allowing the Cognosystem as a whole to remain dynamic and responsive to the changing demands of its environment. This model also sheds light on key transitional moments that drive the renewal of narratives, ensuring their relevance and functionality in the face of new challenges and realities. The interdependence among these stages emphasizes the inherent flexibility of narratives as living systems—capable of generating internal coherence while fostering creativity and resilience within an increasingly complex context.

V. The dynamics of change in narrative systems

Complementing the concept of the narrative life cycle, the TCCR introduces the idea of a *dynamic of change* within narrative systems, integrated into this cycle. This dynamic outlines the necessary conditions for narrative transformation to occur, serving as a key tool for predicting the evolution of narratives throughout the cycle. The process is based on the interaction of narratives with internal and external pressures within the Cognosystem, revealing the inherent adaptive and resilient capacity of psychosocial systems. Through this dynamic, narratives not only structure reality as interpretive frameworks, but also function as engines of action that drive adaptation and responsiveness to changes in the environment.

Narrative change, according to the TCCR, is articulated through the integration of two main analytical models: the previously mentioned five stages of the narrative systems life cycle—emergence, development, maturity, decline or transformation, and renewal—and the three phases of narrative change proposed by Roland G. Tharp: Beta (stability), Alpha (crisis), and Delta (reorganization and transformation). This convergence provides a robust conceptual framework for exploring how narratives evolve and respond to the dynamic tensions generated by both internal factors—such as belief conflicts or identity crises—and external factors, including social, political, cultural, and economic changes.

In this context, narratives are understood not only as structural tools but also as catalytic agents of transformation. The process of narrative change is dynamic and evolutionary, following a spiral pattern of development that allows the Cognosystem to shift to-

ward new states of equilibrium. This continuous movement of tension and resolution enables emerging narratives not only to address immediate challenges but also to continually reformulate existing interpretive frameworks, expanding the possibilities for meaning and action.

The following are the three phases of change in narrative systems, as proposed by the TCCR:

1. Beta phase (stability)

The Beta Phase, within the framework of the dynamics of change in narrative systems according to the TCCR, represents a fundamental state of narrative stability and cohesion. This stage of the process reflects a low level of narrative entropy, where dominant narratives achieve a high degree of internal coherence, allowing them to function effectively and efficiently. During this phase, the system attains a dynamic equilibrium in which narrative adjustments are subtle and respond to gradual changes without altering the central structure or compromising the core values that underpin the dominant narrative.

This phase is closely linked to the stages of *emergence*, *development*, and *maturity* in the life cycle of narrative systems—a process characterized by the progressive consolidation of the narrative as a guiding axis for decisions and actions. For example, in a community that adopts the narrative "Cooperation strengthens the community," stability is reflected in sustained initiatives such as skill-sharing programs or solidarity-based economic systems. These actions not only reinforce the narrative but also generate a shared sense of belonging and commitment, strengthening social bonds within the system.

Similarly, an international organization that builds its identity around the narrative "Sustainability drives growth" demonstrates stability in this phase when its policies and practices align with actions such as promoting sustainable supply chains and investing in clean technologies. These measures not only consolidate the narrative but also strengthen stakeholder trust, integrating sustainability as a central operational principle within the organization.

In the educational sphere, a school that adopts the narrative "Learning is a universal right" may demonstrate stability by implementing inclusive methodologies, such as classes tailored to different learning styles or the incorporation of accessible technologies. These practices allow the narrative to be reflected in the students' everyday experiences and ensure that the institution remains relevant in the face of cultural or demographic changes.

Identifying characteristics of the Beta phase

The Beta phase represents a key moment of narrative stability that allows the Cognosystem to maintain its functionality without the need for drastic transformations. At this stage, the system balances the need for continuity with the capacity to adapt to moderate external influences, ensuring the relevance and coherence of its narratives. The following characteristics make it possible to accurately identify whether a narrative system is in this phase:

- **Coherence in decisions and actions:** Choices and behaviors within the system consistently align with the core values of the narrative.

- **Internal and external acceptance:** There is a low level of questioning regarding the fundamental foundations of the narrative, both within and outside the system.

- **Gradual adaptability:** The narrative system shows an effective capacity to adjust to minor changes in its environment without compromising its core propositions.

- **Reinforcement of internal trust:** The narrative fosters a high degree of internal trust and cohesion among those who sustain it, promoting a dynamic of ideological conformity both intrapersonally and interpersonally.

- **Emotional and psychological stability:** Individuals within the system exhibit resilience in the face of external influences, maintaining a sense of integrity and narrative balance.

In summary, the Beta phase symbolizes a crucial moment of narrative stability in which the Cognosystem operates efficiently, ensuring coherence and functionality in its dominant narratives. This state does not imply immobility; rather, it establishes a flexible framework that allows for responses to environmental challenges without compromising the essence of the narrative, thereby ensuring its long-term adaptability and relevance.

2. Alpha phase (crisis)

The Alpha phase presents itself as a critical moment of destabilization, characterized by a notable increase in narrative entropy. During this stage, dominant narratives begin to show cracks, affected by internal and external tensions that render them less coherent and less functional for the individuals and groups who uphold them. However, this destabilization should not be interpreted solely as a destructive crisis; rather, it is a transitional process that opens space for reflection and transformation. The rupture of narrative homeostasis compels the Cognosystem to become more dynamic and to reconfigure its interconnected narrative structures, enabling it to adapt systemically to a changing environment and new contextual demands.

In the life cycle of narratives, the Alpha Phase corresponds to their *decline* or *transformation*. It is the point at which existing narratives cease to respond effectively to the demands of their context and begin to be questioned. For example, an agricultural community facing a severe and prolonged drought might see its core narrative of self-sufficiency—"We are self-sufficient thanks to agriculture"—weaken, as it becomes increasingly dependent on external aid for survival. This questioning of a deeply rooted narrative could lead to the search for new strategies, such as economic diversification or intercommunity cooperation, in order to rebuild a more relevant and functional narrative.

Similarly, in the organizational sphere, a technology company that loses its competitive edge to more innovative players might begin to question its long-standing narrative, "Our tradition guarantees our success." This challenge could trigger an internal transformation process in which the narrative is reconfigured to emphasize values such as agility, innovation, and the integration of new technologies, thereby ensuring its relevance in a dynamic and competitive market.

In the education sector, a university experiencing a sharp decline in enrollment due to demographic changes may face tensions surrounding its narrative, "Our academic excellence attracts the best students." The Alpha phase, in this case, could manifest through a reexamination of its institutional identity, fostering inclusive narratives that value diversity and accessibility. This may lead to the creation of programs aimed at underrepresented communities or the introduction of flexible and adaptive educational modalities.

Identifying characteristics of the Alpha phase

The Alpha Phase can be identified through a series of symptoms and characteristics that reflect the process of destabilization and the preparation for narrative transformation. These indicators are essential for diagnosing the state of crisis in a narrative system within the Cognosystem and for understanding the dynamics that drive reorganization:

- **Increase in internal and external tensions:** The narrative faces a growing number of external challenges that undermine its internal coherence, such as economic crises, drastic social changes, technological transformations, and so on.

- **Narrative fragmentation:** The narrative begins to break down, revealing inconsistencies that weaken it in the face of new and contradictory realities.

- **Active questioning:** Individuals and collectives engage in a process of critical reflection that casts doubt on the core beliefs underpinning the narrative system.

- **Conflicts across systemic levels:** The narrative begins to experience tensions with narratives from various ecosystemic levels: the microsystemic level (individual narratives), the mesosystemic level (group, family, and organizational narratives), and the macrosystemic level (sociocultural narratives), reflecting dissonance between the narrative in question, the interconnected narratives, and the context.

- **Decline in trust in the dominant narrative:** Emotional and cognitive adherence to the narrative decreases, increasing receptivity to new meaning systems that offer greater functionality and relevance.

In conclusion, the Alpha phase represents a critical point within the dynamics of change in narrative systems. Although challenging, this stage offers an invaluable opportunity for narrative evolution and redesign. Through the recognition and conscious management of its symptoms, narrative systems can reorganize to incorporate more adaptive perspectives, thereby ensuring their relevance and functionality in dynamic and complex

contexts.

3. Delta phase (reorganization and transformation)

The Delta phase constitutes a key moment within the dynamics of change in narrative systems, characterized by the reorganization and redefinition of narrative structures. In this stage, the narrative meaning system works actively to resolve the tensions accumulated during the Alpha phase, restoring balance through the integration of new meanings that bring coherence and functionality to the system as a whole. As narrative entropy decreases, the new narrative system consolidates, reconfigures, and adapts to current challenges, allowing it to evolve into a more resilient and adaptive state.

Within the framework of the life cycle of narrative systems, the Delta phase aligns with the stage of *renewal*, in which narratives are redefined to ensure their relevance and sustainability in a dynamic environment. This process involves not only the incorporation of new meanings—often drawn from other narrative systems—but also the creative reinterpretation of existing ones in response to contemporary realities.

For example, a company that has suffered a significant market loss might adopt a transformative narrative such as "Multidimensional innovation as the key to success," instead of maintaining a narrative centered on "Excellence in a single sector." This new narrative, integrated into corporate strategies and daily workplace practices, allows the organization to regain cohesion and guide actions that strengthen its competitiveness in the market. In the cultural context, a society undergoing a generational shift may transform its narrative from "Respect for tradition defines us" to one that blends the traditional with the emerging, such as "Evolution rooted in our traditions," thus reflecting a creative adaptation to current social demands.

Internal dynamics of the Delta phase

During this phase, several fundamental processes are activated that guide narrative reorganization:

a. **Integration of emerging meanings:** The narrative system actively incorporates new meanings that respond to the tensions and fragmentations experienced during the Alpha Phase. For example, in an educational organization, the implementation of technological programs following a pandemic crisis may become consolidated into a new institutional narrative that values digital inclusion as a key tool for learning.

b. **Decrease in narrative entropy:** The reduction of incoherencies reflects a gradual return to a state of narrative order. For instance, in a family that has faced an economic crisis, the narrative "Overcoming adversity together" may be reinforced through the implementation of collaborative strategies that promote financial and emotional stability.

c. **Consolidation of new narrative meanings as guides for action:** The new meanings incorporated into the narrative system become central references for decisions and behaviors. A community that redefines its relationship with natural resources might integrate the narrative "Sustainability is the future" through local policies promoting renewable energy and waste reduction.

d. **Renewal of purpose:** In this phase, the narrative system redefines its direction, strengthening a sense of unity and shared purpose. For example, an NGO that has overcome an internal crisis may develop a narrative centered on "Innovate to make an impact," guiding its efforts toward projects aligned with its renewed mission.

e. **Restoration of collective trust:** The adoption of adaptive meanings reinforces individuals' trust in the narrative system. In a work team that adopts the narrative "Collaboration makes us stronger" after overcoming internal conflicts, group cohesion is revitalized and inspires new shared achievements.

Identifying characteristics of the Delta phase

To identify that a narrative system is in the Delta Phase, the following concrete indicators can be observed:

- **Emergence of coherent new meanings:** The new meanings show a high degree of integration within the narrative system.

- **Reduction of internal tensions:** A greater narrative harmony is perceived within the system, following the Alpha Phase, with a decrease in conflicts and questioning.

- **Adoption of concrete practices:** The narrative materializes in new behaviors, policies, or strategies that reinforce its direction within the Cognosystem.

- **Resilience in the face of new challenges:** The narrative system demonstrates a strengthened capacity to adapt to future changes while maintaining cohesion around renewed meanings.

In summary, the Delta Phase not only marks the resolution of a narrative crisis, but also inaugurates a new cycle of stability and relevance within it. This process highlights the importance of the adaptability of narrative systems as a key to their sustainability and success in a constantly evolving world.

The following is a comparative table that illustrates the correlation between the five stages of the life cycle of a narrative system and the phases of narrative change or evolution according to the TCCR:

Stages of the life cycle of narrative systems	Description of the narrative life cycle	Convergence with the three phases of change dynamics in narrative systems
1. Emergence	Beginning of a narrative that organizes experiences, values, and beliefs in response to new realities.	Related to the initial *phase of Beta*, where the new narrative seeks initial stability.
2. Development	Consolidation and expansion of the narrative, validated through social interaction and ongoing experience.	Corresponds to refinement within the *Beta phase*, consolidating coherence and adjusting minor details.
3. Maturity	Dominant or stable narrative, deeply integrated into identity and everyday practices.	Full stability in the *Beta phase*, though susceptible to transition into Alpha if a crisis emerges.
4. Decline or transformation	The narrative loses relevance or functionality, facing challenges that lead to fragmentation or change.	Destabilization in the *Alpha phase*, with an increase in entropy that drives narrative reorganization.
5. Renewal	Creation of a new narrative or renewal of the existing one to respond to emerging contexts.	Connected to the *Delta phase*, where the narrative is reorganized to integrate coherence and functionality through new meanings.

6. HIERARCHY OF NARRATIVES IN THE TCCR

THE TCCR INTRODUCES AN INNOVATIVE THEORETICAL conceptualization regarding the existence of *narrative hierarchies* within the Cognosystem—a phenomenon responsible for the organization and classification of these symbolic constructs based on their capacity to structure and transform social reality and individual experiences. This theoretical framework provides an advanced analytical tool for uncovering the power dynamics that arise within the Cognosystem, making visible how certain narratives achieve hegemony while others are marginalized or even obliterated. Moreover, it enables the exploration of systemic processes of narrative reproduction and transformation, emphasizing their fundamental role in shaping the sociocultural fabric.

Conceptualization of narrative hierarchy

The concept of *narrative hierarchy* stands as an essential pillar in the TCCR, as it enables an understanding of the interactions among narratives and the power relations that emerge across various ecosystemic levels. Far from assuming that narratives operate neutrally or independently, this theory positions them as active agents within highly complex social, political, and cultural systems. The dynamic nature of these hierarchies reveals how narratives can fluctuate depending on historical contexts, social resistance, or cultural transformations, thus facilitating an advanced understanding of narrative power flows.

In this sense, narrative hierarchy—within the framework of the TCCR—is concretely conceptualized as follows:

CONCEPT:

Narrative Hierarchy: Refers to the structural and functional stratification of narrative systems within the Cognosystem, based on their capacity to influence and reconfigure sociocultural reality. This hierarchy considers the extent to which a narrative can shape collective beliefs and its potential—high or low—to structure and guide both individual and group behaviors.

In this sense, narrative hierarchy is not conceived as a static phenomenon, but rather as an evolutionary process that reflects the systemic interactions between narratives and sociocultural contexts. The inherent adaptability of these stratifications allows new narratives to emerge, challenging preexisting structures and promoting substantial cultural transformations.

In this regard, the concept of narrative hierarchy encompasses two fundamental analytical aspects in its cognosystemic functioning:

a. **Narratives as constructs of power:** From an advanced perspective, narratives are understood as constructs of power that delineate the boundaries of what is considered "real," "possible," and "legitimate" within a society. Hegemonic narratives, once institutionalized as unquestionable truths, shape dominant interpretive frameworks that influence both individual and collective decisions. A paradigmatic example is the narrative of "meritocracy," common in the context of postmodernity, which posits that success is solely the result of individual effort. This discourse often shapes public policy, influences educational systems, and legitimizes socioeconomic inequalities by masking the structural limitations that restrict access to resources and opportunities.

   In contrast, subjugated narratives—such as those that expose the systemic inequities that undermine meritocracy—face systematic marginalization. For instance, the discourse highlighting how unequal access to education and cultural capital conditions individual success has gained traction as an alternative narrative through its articulation in social movements and public debates. These narratives hold the potential to reconfigure hegemonic structures by fostering critical awareness and catalyzing collective mobilization.

b. **Interaction and conflict between narratives:** Narrative hierarchy also reflects the interactive dynamics and inherent conflict between narratives that compete for legitimacy and dominance within the Cognosystem. This phenomenon is clearly manifested in the clash between traditional and emerging narratives. A telling example is the conflict between the narrative of "industrial growth based on fossil

fuels" and the narratives promoting a transition to renewable energy sources. While the traditional narrative relies on arguments of economic feasibility and job stability, emerging narratives articulate discourses that emphasize environmental urgency, sustainability, and technological opportunity.

This narrative conflict creates spaces for transformation within the Cognosystem. For instance, in communities heavily dependent on coal mining, the hegemonic narrative has been challenged by pilot projects that demonstrate the viability of clean energy–based economic models. These examples show how emerging narratives can ascend within the narrative hierarchy by establishing new frameworks of legitimacy and social acceptance.

In summary, the concept of *narrative hierarchy* in the TCCR proposes not only to classify these symbolic constructions according to their power of influence, but also to reveal the complex interactions of resistance and transformation that shape social structures. This advanced approach not only identifies opportunities for more inclusive psychosocial interventions, but also deepens the understanding of narrative dynamics in a constantly changing world, fostering a critical and proactive analysis of systemic power relations.

Conceptualization of narrative power and its hierarchical dynamics

Narrative power, within the framework of the TCCR, is a fundamental theoretical element in the shaping of social reality and in the structuring of individual and collective experiences. It is a complex mechanism of influence that operates neither uniformly nor statically, but rather in relation to historical, cultural, and political variables that shape it. Its dynamism lies in its capacity to impose, challenge, or reframe interpretive frameworks within the Cognosystem. This power is expressed through processes of domination, resistance, and transformation, allowing certain narratives to consolidate while others lose relevance or are reformulated.

Dimensions of narrative power

Narrative power unfolds across different dimensions, each of which plays a specific role in the shaping of the Cognosystem. However, before exploring these dimensions, it is crucial to understand that, within the TCCR framework, narrative power is not a phenomenon that operates linearly; rather, it interacts with social, cultural, and political structures, enabling its consolidation, legitimization, transformation, or resistance in relation to preexisting narratives. Understanding these dimensions is essential for analyzing how narratives influence the collective perception of reality.

The following are the dimensions of power proposed by the TCCR:

- **Structuring dimension:** The structuring dimension of narrative power lies in its ability to establish norms, values, and principles that regulate social behavior. Narratives with a high degree of structuring function as dominant interpretive frameworks, shaping the perception of reality without the need for coercive imposition. A paradigmatic example is the narrative of "meritocracy," which shapes the understanding of success and failure in capitalist societies, legitimizing the idea that individual effort is the primary determinant of economic and social development.

- **Legitimizing dimension:** This dimension of narrative power refers to a narrative's capacity to establish itself as unquestionable truth within a social system. This consolidation is achieved when a narrative is reproduced and reinforced by key institutions such as education, law, and the media. The narrative of "national security," for example, has been used by various states to justify restrictive measures on civil rights under the premise of guaranteeing order and stability.

- **Transformative dimension:** Narratives with high transformative power are capable of challenging and replacing hegemonic narratives, generating new interpretive paradigms. A representative case is the transition from fossil fuel narratives to those promoting sustainability and renewable energy, leading to a reconfiguration of the global political and economic agenda.

- **Resistance dimension:** Lastly, the resistance dimension—an equally important, though often less visible, aspect of narrative power—is manifested in subaltern or marginalized narratives. These narratives often possess a significant power of persistence over time, challenging established cultural hegemony and resisting erasure despite their exclusion from dominant discourses. An illustrative example is the struggle to preserve Indigenous languages in the face of linguistic homogenization driven by globalization.

Dynamics of narrative power

Narrative power is not a fixed entity; it is in constant motion, shaped by sociopolitical, cultural, and economic factors. Its dynamism depends not only on its position within the narrative hierarchy but also on its interaction with other narratives, generating fluctuations, redistributions, and expansions within the Cognosystem.

- **Fluctuation of power:** Narratives can gain or lose power depending on their ability to respond to systemic crises. During the 2008 financial crisis, for example, the narrative of "market self-regulation" lost legitimacy in favor of discourses advocating for greater state intervention in the economy.

- **Redistribution of narrative power:** Dominant narratives may incorporate elements from challenging narratives in order to preserve their influence. An example is how corporations have adopted the discourse of "environmental sustainability" without substantially altering their economic structures.

- **Narrative contagion:** Narrative power expands when a narrative manages to replicate across different contexts and is appropriated by diverse sectors. The "collaborative economy," which originated in small digital communities, exemplifies how a narrative can transform into a global economic paradigm.

Factors that determine narrative power

The impact of a narrative depends on its ability to generate resonance and legitimacy within the Cognosystem. The most influential narratives are those that succeed in connecting with collective emotions, adapting to the sociopolitical context, and becoming institutionalized within structures of power.

The following are the most relevant factors in the dynamics of narrative power, according to the TCCR:

- **Emotional resonance:** Narratives that mobilize fundamental emotions such as fear, hope, or indignation have a high social impact. For example, narratives like the "fight against corruption" have been instrumentalized in various political contexts to legitimize structural changes.

- **Contextual relevance:** Narratives gain greater power when they address emerging issues. Global concern over climate change, for instance, has strengthened narratives centered on ecological transition.

- **Capacity for institutionalization:** Finally, a narrative is reinforced when it is embedded within institutional structures. This is the case with the narrative in favor of "human rights," which has been consolidated through its adoption in international legal frameworks.

Intervention and modification of narrative power

Narrative power is expressed not only in the consolidation of discursive structures but also in their transformation and reconfiguration over time. Since narratives operate within a dynamic environment, their stability is not guaranteed and may be subject to intentional intervention for modification. Such intervention can be directed either toward the delegitimization of hegemonic narratives or toward the strengthening of emerging narratives seeking greater influence within the Cognosystem. The study of these dynamics makes it possible to understand how narratives can be strategically modified to generate changes in the interpretive frameworks that structure intersubjective social reality.

Some examples of these interventions include:

- **Delegitimization of hegemonic narratives:** Dominant narratives can be weakened through critical deconstruction. The questioning of the narrative of "unlimited progress" is a key example in contemporary debates.

- **Empowerment of emerging narratives:** Alternative narratives can be strengthened through their dissemination in institutional spaces, such as the recognition of "emotional well-being" in public policy.

- **Redistribution of narrative power:** Supporting the integration of marginalized narratives into social structures and institutions that validate them, thereby redistributing power among multiple narratives rather than maintaining a single dominant one.

In conclusion, narrative power in this theory is configured as a structuring force that influences the perception of social reality and the organization of individual and collective experiences. Its dynamic nature implies that it can not only be consolidated within hegemonic frameworks, but also transformed, redistributed, or challenged by emerging narratives. The dimensions of narrative power—its structuring, legitimizing, transformative, and resistant capacities—make it possible to understand how certain discourses become consolidated while others weaken or evolve in response to contextual factors.

Likewise, fluctuations in the narrative hierarchy respond to systemic crises, sociopolitical changes, and discursive strategies that reconfigure the balance of the Cognosystem. Narrative contagion, the redistribution of discursive power, and the institutionalization of certain narratives explain the capacity of discourses to expand and reshape existing structures. Understanding these processes not only allows for the analysis of the evolution of narrative power but also enables intervention in its transformation, by strengthening alternative narratives and challenging those that have achieved hegemony.

Stratification of narratives in the cognosystemic hierarchy

The TCCR proposes a type of stratification of narrative systems based on their capacity to influence the shaping of social reality and the subjective experiences of individuals. This hierarchical model not only enables the analysis of power and resistance dynamics within the Cognosystem, but also allows for the exploration of the complex interactions among narratives across different ecosystemic levels. In this context, narratives are conceived as active, interdependent, and constantly evolving entities, capable of shaping cultural, social, and political structures. The hierarchy—ranging from subjugated narratives to hegemonic ones—is essential for understanding the mechanisms through which narratives generate and perpetuate inequalities, transform institutions, and catalyze significant sociocultural change.

The following are the different narrative strata of the Cognosystem, as proposed by the TCCR:

- **Subjugated narratives:** Subjugated narratives occupy the lowest level of the hierarchy, characterized by their lack of power to influence dominant structures. These narratives represent the voices of marginalized groups and individuals who often lack access to political, economic, or symbolic resources. Their subjugated condition is defined by a lack of legitimacy and social visibility, perpetuating their exclusion from public debate and decision-making processes.

  For example, in rural contexts affected by industrial expansion, the narratives of displaced communities denouncing environmental and cultural degradation are often ignored in favor of discourses that exalt economic progress. This dynamic reinforces their subjugated status, relegating their concerns to the background and limiting their capacity to drive change.

- **Resigned narratives:** Resigned narratives reflect a passive acceptance of the status quo, arising from the perception that change is either impossible or unattainable. These narratives perpetuate existing structures by discouraging critical questioning and transformative action.

  A representative example can be found in communities facing structural poverty. In such contexts, the belief that adverse circumstances are inevitable reinforces inaction and indirectly legitimizes systemic inequalities. The resigned narrative functions as a mechanism that inhibits collective mobilization and reinforces the dominance of hegemonic structures.

- **Adaptive narratives:** Adaptive narratives, while not directly challenging the status quo, seek to improve individual or group conditions within the constraints imposed by dominant structures. These narratives adopt a pragmatic approach, prioritizing strategies that enhance personal well-being without altering underlying norms.

  In the corporate sphere, for example, narratives that promote "self-improvement" and "entrepreneurship" stand out as mechanisms of adaptation. These narratives reinforce the belief that individual success is achievable within the existing system, without questioning the structural inequalities inherent to it. This approach allows for a degree of mobility, while leaving the foundations of the social order intact.

- **Resilient narratives:** Resilient narratives go beyond mere adaptation, promoting active resistance in the face of adversity and oppression. These narratives aim to preserve identity and overcome the obstacles imposed by dominant structures, often generating partial transformations in the process.

  An illustrative example is that of Indigenous communities who, in the face of globalized cultural hegemony, work to revitalize their traditions, languages, and cultural practices. These narratives not only resist cultural homogenization but

also open spaces for negotiation and transformation within the dominant framework, demonstrating a significant capacity to partially subvert hegemonic norms.

- **Challenging narratives:** Challenging narratives possess a broader transformative capacity, as they directly question established power structures and propose viable alternatives. These narratives act as catalysts for cognosystemic change, redefining dominant paradigms and generating new forms of social organization.

  A paradigmatic example can be found in the narratives emerging from environmental justice movements, which question the foundations of consumerism and the unchecked exploitation of natural resources. These narratives not only denounce existing practices but also promote sustainable models that challenge the hegemonic logics of unlimited economic growth.

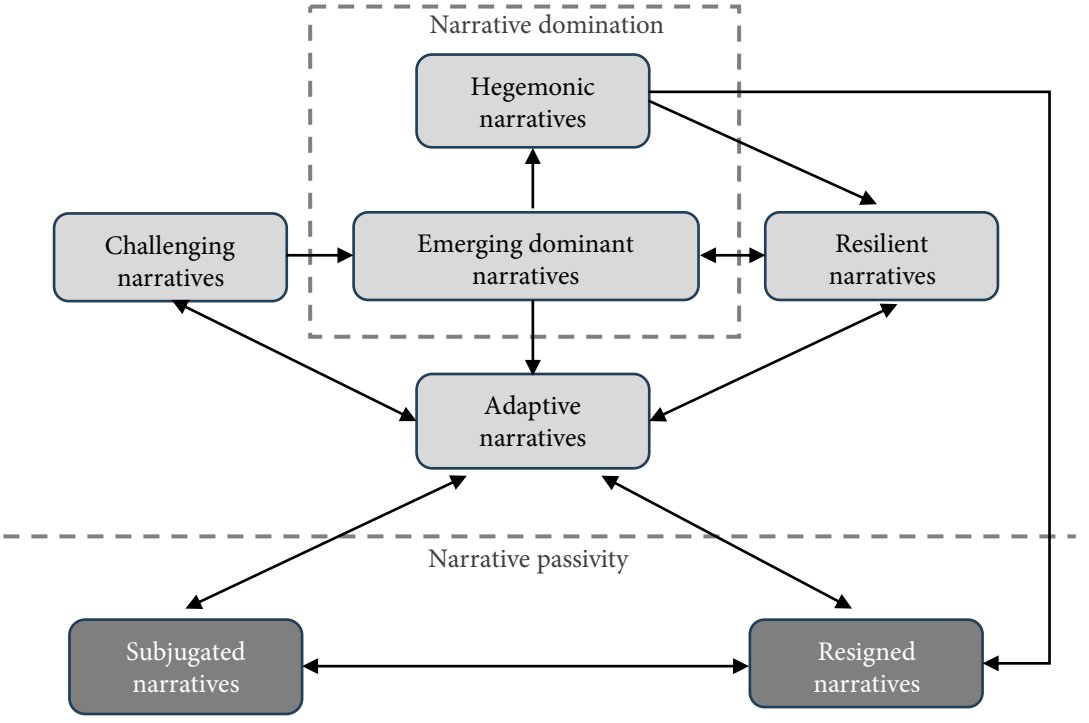
- **Emerging dominant narratives:** Emerging dominant narratives are those in the process of transitioning toward hegemony. Although these narratives have not yet fully consolidated their position, they are gaining legitimacy and progressively displacing previously hegemonic narratives.

  A notable example is the rise of narratives surrounding digitalization and automation in the labor market. These narratives are redefining the organization of work by prioritizing technological efficiency and the reduction of operational costs, gradually replacing traditional narratives centered on stable employment and long-term professional training. This process illustrates how emerging narratives can transform the structural foundations of the economy and reconfigure social expectations regarding work and job stability.

- **Hegemonic narratives:** At the top of the hierarchy are hegemonic narratives, which dominate and structure social reality by legitimizing the norms, values, and beliefs that govern collective life. These narratives are perceived as "natural" or "inevitable," and as a result, face little resistance within the Cognosystem.

  A clear example is the narrative of liberal democracy as the most desirable political model. This discourse not only structures the organization of governmental systems across much of the world but also defines expectations around individual rights, citizen participation, and the legitimacy of power. Its hegemony is reinforced through international institutions, legal frameworks, and educational systems, consolidating its dominant position and presenting itself as the "natural" and most efficient political system.

Cognosystemic narrative stratification in the TCCR



Ultimately, the stratification of narratives within the hierarchy proposed by the TCCR provides a robust analytical tool for examining how narratives interact, shape, and transform the Cognosystem. This approach enables not only a comprehensive understanding of narrative dynamics and the processes of change that emerge in a constantly evolving world, but also a critical assessment of the mechanisms by which narratives are consolidated or displaced within a given sociocultural environment.

Understanding how certain narratives achieve hegemony while others are marginalized or suppressed is essential for analyzing the ways in which discourses shape both subjective and intersubjective realities. Furthermore, this perspective makes it possible to highlight the role of individual and collective actors in the reproduction and resignification of preexisting narratives, allowing for a deeper understanding of discursive change processes and their impact on the overall structure of the suprasystem.

Dynamics of narrative hierarchy

The hierarchy of narratives in the TCCR is understood as a dynamic system in constant reconfiguration. Far from being a static structure, narrative hierarchy is shaped by a series of interactions between internal and external factors that enable its mobility within the Cognosystem. These transformations respond not only to changes in public discourse or social opinion, but also to political, technological, and structural processes that create conditions for certain narratives to rise in influence while others lose relevance. This narrative mobility reflects the symbolic struggles within societies, where competing narratives may be consolidated, weakened, or reformulated depending on the balance of discursive and structural forces.

This dynamism is influenced by discursive validation strategies such as the institutionalization of normative frameworks, legitimization by powerful actors, media appropriation, and the impact of sociocultural trends that reshape the acceptability of certain discourses. Likewise, the decline of a narrative is often linked to its inability to respond to the needs of the environment or to the emergence of counter-narratives that undermine its hegemony.

The following are some important aspects to consider in this dynamic of hierarchical transformation within the Cognosystem:

a. **Internal transformation of narrative systems:** Narratives do not possess an immutable structure; on the contrary, their evolution is an inherent phenomenon resulting from their interaction with the sociocultural environment. In this sense, a narrative that initially occupies a subordinate position within the hierarchy can, through progressive processes of legitimization, ascend and become a challenging or even dominant narrative.

   A paradigmatic example is the narrative of the "energy transition." In its early stages, this narrative was promoted by small environmental groups and lacked significant political and corporate backing. However, as environmental crises and evidence of climate change gained greater prominence in global discourse, this narrative began to permeate strategic decision-making spheres, becoming consolidated within hegemonic discourse. Its rise materialized through international agreements, government regulations, and structural transformations in the energy matrix of various countries, progressively displacing previous narratives centered on fossil fuel dominance.

b. **Influence of external factors:** Narratives do not operate in a discursive vacuum; their stability and evolution largely depend on the influence of external factors that can either accelerate or hinder their movement within the hierarchy. Elements such as political crises, technological innovations, social conflicts, and economic shifts can create favorable conditions for the consolidation of emerging narratives or the dissolution of previously hegemonic discourses.

For example, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically altered the narrative surrounding "remote work." Prior to this global crisis, that narrative was considered a marginal solution for a limited segment of the workforce. However, the restrictions imposed by the health emergency forced the widespread adoption of remote work, accelerating its consolidation within the dominant discourse. This narrative shift had profound implications for organizational culture, labor legislation, and the reconfiguration of the workspace, illustrating how an external event can radically alter a narrative's position within the discursive hierarchy.

c. **Crisis and reconfiguration:** Crises represent moments of instability in which the hierarchy of narratives undergoes accelerated reconfigurations. During these periods, narratives that were previously in marginal positions can quickly ascend if they succeed in offering compelling responses or viable alternatives to emerging challenges. Likewise, crises can undermine the credibility of established narratives, creating discursive voids that allow for the emergence of new interpretations.

An illustrative case of this phenomenon is the narrative of "productive sovereignty" in the agri-food sector. In previous decades, globalization had promoted the efficiency of international supply chains as the dominant model for economic management. However, crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and recent geopolitical conflicts have exposed the fragility of this system, paving the way for the consolidation of narratives that emphasize the need to strengthen local and regional production to ensure food security. In this context, a previously challenging narrative succeeded in gaining visibility within public and political discourse, altering perceptions of global interdependence and economic self-sufficiency.

In conclusion, the dynamics of narrative hierarchy in the TCCR represent a continuous process of interaction between competing narratives, shaped by internal and external factors that influence the stability of the Cognosystem. The internal transformation of narratives, the impact of disruptive events, and the reconfiguration during times of crisis are fundamental elements for understanding narrative mobility and its effect on social structure. Analyzing these processes makes it possible to understand how emerging narratives challenge established structures, as well as the mechanisms through which dominant narratives seek to preserve their influence in a constantly changing world.

Narrative hierarchical mobility

The movement of narratives within the cognosystemic hierarchy is a structured phenomenon, conditioned by systemic interactions that respond to sociocultural, political, and epistemological factors. This displacement is neither spontaneous nor random; it follows transformation logics that regulate the stability, crisis, and reorganization of narratives across various levels of the Cognosystem. Narrative mobility can manifest in three forms: *ascending*, when a narrative gains influence and rises within the hierarchy; *descending*, when a narrative loses relevance and is pushed into lower strata; or *horizontal*, when a

narrative shifts without changing its hierarchical level but adapts its expression according to the context in which it operates.

This displacement not only affects the internal structure of the Cognosystem but also impacts the configuration of the social, political, and economic systems in which these narratives emerge and consolidate. As a narrative shifts within the hierarchy, institutions are reconfigured, normative frameworks are reformulated, and the interpretive models of shared reality are modified. This helps explain how certain narratives come to hegemonize dominant discourse, while others are marginalized or delegitimized.

Phases of hierarchical displacement

The hierarchical displacement of narratives within the Cognosystem can be understood through the same three phases of narrative change or evolution previously discussed: Beta, Alpha, and Delta. These phases make it possible to analyze the mechanisms of consolidation, crisis, and hierarchical transformation of narratives over time within the Cognosystem as a whole.

Description of the phases:

- **Beta phase (hierarchical stability):** In the Beta phase, dominant narratives maintain a position of stability within the Cognosystem. They are perceived as unquestionable truths and are reinforced through mechanisms of social legitimization, such as discursive institutionalization, educational normalization, political regulation, and media reproduction. During this phase, the hegemonic narrative consolidates and exerts a structural influence on the collective perception of reality.

  For example, the narrative that "continuous economic growth is essential for social well-being" has remained in the Beta phase for decades, supported by global financial institutions, dominant political discourses, and traditional educational frameworks. This narrative has been embedded in economic teaching models and public policies, generating a perception of inevitability regarding its validity. The strength of its position, in this case, is primarily due to its integration into the normative systems that regulate economic activity on a global scale.

- **Alpha phase (crisis and destabilization):** The Alpha phase represents a moment of crisis that destabilizes the previously dominant narrative. This crisis may result from internal contradictions, the emergence of empirical evidence that refutes its validity, disruptive social movements, or structural crises that expose its limitations.

  Some of the mechanisms that drive the Alpha phase include:

  a. **Internal discrediting:** The dominant narrative loses coherence as it reveals inconsistencies or fails to respond to new social demands.

b. **Emergence of competing narratives:** Alternative discourses arise that challenge the established narrative, proposing models more aligned with the emerging reality.

c. **Reconfiguration of the epistemic framework:** Shifts in knowledge paradigms may invalidate previous narratives, displacing them from their position of centrality.

A clear example of this phase is the growing challenge to the narrative of "continuous economic growth." Emerging narratives such as the "circular economy" and "sustainable degrowth" have begun to undermine its stability, particularly in light of climate and ecological crises that have exposed the limits of the productivist model. As these alternative narratives gain traction, the hierarchical structure of the Cognosystem becomes unstable, creating space for discursive reconfiguration.

- **Delta phase (hierarchical reorganization and transformation):** In the Delta phase, the narrative in crisis undergoes structural reconfiguration within the Cognosystem. This phase may result in the rise of an emerging narrative, the reformulation of the previous narrative to adapt to new conditions, or the displacement of a narrative to a marginal position.

  Key characteristics of the Delta phase include:

  a. **Narrative plasticity:** Narratives in this phase are highly flexible and can absorb elements from emerging discourses to enhance their adaptability.

  b. **Redistribution of narrative power:** Power relations within the Cognosystem are redefined, allowing new narratives to consolidate and replace previous models.

  c. **Construction of alternative interpretive frameworks:** Emerging narratives establish new meaning structures, reorganizing the way individuals perceive social reality.

  An example of this phase can be seen in the transformation of the traditional economic narrative in response to the crisis of classical or conservative capitalism. Concepts such as "regenerative economy" have begun to consolidate within public discourse, gradually displacing the paradigm of indefinite growth.

Integration of the phases within the Cognosystem

The analysis of the Beta, Alpha, and Delta phases within the Cognosystem provides a framework for understanding the dynamics of narrative displacement and its impact on the construction of intersubjective social reality. This model enables strategic intervention in processes of discursive reconfiguration through three key actions:

- **Narrative diagnosis:** Identify which phase a specific narrative is currently in to assess its stability or fragility within the Cognosystem.

- **Design of intervention strategies:** Implement tools to stimulate narrative change (such as "narrative memes," which will be discussed later) during the Beta or Alpha phases—depending on the case—to facilitate the transition toward more adaptive discursive structures.

- **Consolidation in the Delta phase:** Strengthen emerging narratives through institutional and cultural legitimization mechanisms to ensure their hierarchical consolidation within the Cognosystem.

In conclusion, the analysis of hierarchical narrative displacement within the Cognosystem reveals that narrative systems are not static; rather, they undergo processes of stability, crisis, and reconfiguration depending on the sociocultural and structural conditions in which they operate. The application of the Beta, Alpha, and Delta phases of narrative change enables a deeper understanding of the dynamics of consolidation, destabilization, and transformation of discourses, providing an analytical framework for assessing the mobility of narratives within the cognosystemic hierarchy.

These mechanisms of hierarchical displacement illustrate how dominant narratives can be challenged by emerging discourses, which may gain legitimacy and reposition themselves within the suprasystem through processes of discursive reorganization. Likewise, the study of these displacements enables strategic intervention in the development and consolidation of new narratives, facilitating their adaptation to constantly evolving scenarios.

Ultimately, the mobility of narratives within the hierarchy is a complex phenomenon that reflects the struggles over meaning and symbolic power within the fabric of human sociocultural life. Understanding these processes not only broadens the theoretical perspective on narrative construction but also provides methodological tools for the transformation and consolidation of discourses within the Cognosystem.

Mechanisms of hierarchical displacement

Narratives within the Cognosystem are not static; they evolve based on their interaction with social, political, and cultural structures. Their mobility can manifest in three directions: *ascending*, when emerging narratives manage to consolidate and displace dominant discourses; *descending*, when previously hegemonic narratives lose legitimacy and relevance; and *horizontal*, when narratives at the same hierarchical level compete, are reformulated, or converge into new discursive syntheses.

The rise of a narrative is often facilitated by systemic crises that weaken dominant narratives, its adoption by influential actors, and feedback processes that amplify its reach. In contrast, narratives may descend when they become obsolete, face social resistance, or

are displaced by more adaptive discourses. Meanwhile, horizontal displacements reflect the competition between narratives at the same hierarchical level, generating discursive frictions that may lead to reformulations or the consolidation of new perspectives.

The following section provides a description of each of the aforementioned mechanisms of hierarchical displacement:

a) Ascending mechanisms

The ascent of narratives within the Cognosystem responds to structured dynamics of legitimization, expansion, and discursive appropriation. In this process, narratives positioned in subaltern places within the hierarchy can gain prominence when validated by strategic actors, replicated across different systemic levels, and reinforced by events that destabilize the status quo. As a narrative rises, it increases its capacity to influence the normative, political, and cultural frameworks that shape social reality.

- **Systemic crisis:** Systemic crises create favorable conditions for the reconfiguration of narrative hierarchy. In these moments of disruption, dominant narratives may lose legitimacy by failing to provide satisfactory responses to emerging challenges, allowing previously marginalized discourses to position themselves as viable alternatives. These crises can be economic, political, environmental, or cultural, and often act as catalysts for far-reaching discursive transformations.

  A paradigmatic example is the 2008 financial crisis, which exposed the vulnerabilities of the dominant neoliberal model and triggered widespread questioning of the free-market economy in its purest and most conservative form. In this context, previously peripheral narratives about financial regulation and economic justice gained legitimacy and began to influence global decision-making. Similarly, the climate crisis has driven the consolidation of narratives that emphasize sustainability and energy transition, displacing discourses focused on unrestricted economic growth.

- **Adoption by influential actors:** The support of actors with significant social, political, or economic influence is a key factor in the ascent of a narrative. When an emerging narrative is adopted by political leaders, state institutions, media conglomerates, or corporate actors, its visibility and acceptance increase significantly, accelerating its consolidation within the cognosystemic hierarchy.

  A representative case is the civil rights movement in the United States. Initially, the narrative of racial equality was upheld by marginalized groups, but its expansion was facilitated by the support of influential figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. and its gradual incorporation into institutional frameworks. Similarly, narratives related to economic digitalization have risen in the narrative hierarchy after being adopted by major corporations and governments, displacing traditional discourses focused on the centrality of the manufacturing industry.

- **Systemic feedback:** Narratives do not ascend in isolation, but through feedback processes operating at multiple levels within the Cognosystem. In this context, emerging narratives can gain traction when they are replicated and validated across various domains, thereby amplifying their reach and strengthening their legitimacy.

  An illustrative example is the climate change narrative. Initially confined to scientific circles and environmental activists, this narrative rose within the cognosystemic hierarchy as it was adopted by the media, international organizations, and governmental policies. Similar narratives concerning artificial intelligence regulation and algorithmic ethics have moved from academic debates to political forums, demonstrating the capacity of emerging narratives to reconfigure global discursive frameworks.

b) Descending mechanisms

Dominant narratives can lose their hierarchical position when internal or external factors erode their legitimacy and effectiveness. This process may be driven by internal contradictions, social rejection, or the emergence of more adaptive narratives, leading to a gradual loss of influence within the Cognosystem.

- **Internal discrediting:** Hegemonic narratives may weaken when they reveal inconsistencies that call their validity into question. These contradictions can be exposed by critical actors who challenge the dominant narrative, facilitating its progressive displacement within the hierarchy.

  A prominent example is the declining legitimacy of the narrative that "globalization is inherently positive." For decades, this narrative served as a central pillar in economic policy, but it has been increasingly contested by mounting evidence of inequality and economic crises, paving the way for the resurgence of discourses on protectionism and local economies.

- **Negative feedback:** When a dominant narrative fails to address emerging demands at the microsystemic and mesosystemic levels, it may undergo negative feedback that accelerates its decline. This process is expressed through social resistance, protests, cultural rejection, and oppositional discourse.

  An example of this can be seen in the erosion of legitimacy in certain political regimes whose narrative of "governance and stability" has been undermined by citizen movements demanding greater democratic participation. In such cases, the accumulated rejection at lower levels of the Cognosystem can hasten the fall of a previously dominant narrative.

- **Emergence of competing narratives:** The displacement of a dominant narrative does not occur in a vacuum, but rather within a competitive process in which new narratives seek to position themselves as prevailing discourses. When an emerging

narrative connects more effectively with the values and needs of society, it can displace the hegemonic narrative, reconfiguring the cognosystemic hierarchy.

An illustrative example is the gradual abandonment of the narrative of "lifetime stable employment" in favor of discourses emphasizing "labor flexibility" and "entrepreneurship." This shift reflects a structural transformation in how employment is perceived and in the normative frameworks that govern it.

c) Horizontal feedback and narrative frictions

Tensions between narratives that coexist at the same systemic level can act as catalysts for discursive crises, triggering reconfigurations within the Cognosystem. These frictions may result in the consolidation of one narrative over another or in the creation of new discursive syntheses that integrate elements from both.

- **Narrative frictions as crisis triggers (Alpha phase):** Conflicts between competing narratives can intensify tensions to the point of causing a discursive crisis. This process activates feedback mechanisms that challenge the legitimacy of established narratives and promote their destabilization.

  An example can be seen in the confrontation between the narrative of "responsible consumption" and that of "unrestricted economic growth." This friction has led to strategic adjustments in corporate communication and the formulation of sustainability policies.

- **Narrative collaboration as a strategy in the Delta phase:** In the Delta phase, the integration of conflicting narratives can facilitate the construction of new interpretive frameworks that are more resilient and adaptive. This process enables the reformulation of discourses, generating hybrid narratives that incorporate multiple perspectives.

  An example is the convergence between technological and ecological discourses, which has given rise to narratives of "sustainable innovation" that combine advances in artificial intelligence with sustainable development models. This type of narrative synthesis allows for the consolidation of more integrative discourses within the Cognosystem.

In conclusion, the analysis of narrative mobility within the Cognosystem makes it possible to understand how narratives emerge, consolidate, compete, and decline according to structural and contextual dynamics. Upward mechanisms highlight the ability of marginal narratives to gain legitimacy and displace hegemonic discourses, while downward mechanisms reveal the vulnerability of dominant narratives when they lose coherence or face social resistance. Horizontal shifts, in turn, reflect the ongoing interaction between narratives at the same hierarchical level, where discursive frictions can give rise to innovative syntheses or disputes over symbolic hegemony.

These processes demonstrate that the narrative structure of a society is dynamic and in constant transformation, shaped by systemic crises, the actions of influential actors, and feedback between narrative levels. Understanding these mechanisms not only provides

analytical tools for studying discursive evolution, but also enables strategic intervention in the construction and consolidation of new narratives.

7. THE COGNOSYSTEMIC LAYER DYNAMICS

THE DYNAMICS OF LAYERS IN THE TCCR constitute a key analytical aspect for understanding the interaction and transformation of narratives across different levels of the Cognosystem. This conception acknowledges the stratification of narratives and their multilevel shifts, as well as the processes of adaptation and reconfiguration that emerge from their interaction. Since narratives do not operate in isolation but within an interconnected network of meanings, it is essential to examine how they overlap, influence, and modify one another across diverse sociocultural and historical contexts. The mobility of narratives across layers implies a constant negotiation of meanings, which may lead to the consolidation of certain discourses, the obsolescence of others, or the emergence of hybrid narrative configurations.

Conceptualization of narrative layers

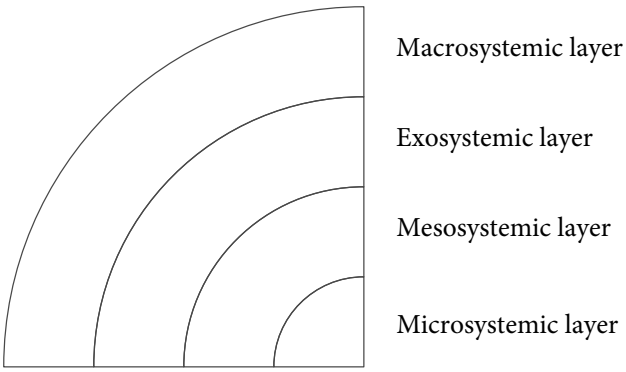
Narrative layers represent differentiated levels of influence and power within the Cognosystem. Each layer groups narrative systems that share common characteristics and exhibit varying degrees of impact depending on their position within the narrative hierarchy. These layers function as hermeneutic filters that facilitate the consolidation of certain discourses while simultaneously restricting the emergence of others, thereby structuring the ways in which intersubjective social reality is interpreted.

CONCEPT:

Narrative Layers: Ecosystemic, interdependent levels of "meaning" structuring within the Cognosystem. These layers not only represent differences in the influence and power of cognosystemic narrative systems, but also function as spheres of discursive articulation in which the interpretive frameworks of intersubjective reality are configured, legitimized, and transformed.

In this sense, narrative layers operate as mediating structures that regulate the circulation, consolidation, and contestation of discourses. By acting as hermeneutic filters, they allow certain narratives to be consolidated while restricting the emergence of others, thereby defining the boundaries of what can be said and thought within a specific psychosocial context.

Layers or levels of the Cognosystem



Additionally, narrative layers exhibit a fluid dynamic, as they are neither static nor impermeable, mutually influencing one another from macro to micro levels and vice versa. Through their interaction with other layers, they enable the mobility of narratives, allowing for both the rise of emerging discourses and the dismantling of previously hegemonic narratives. This mobility, influenced by structural and contextual factors, determines the evolution and persistence of narratives within the Cognosystem.

Narrative layers as strata of meaning

Narrative layers can be conceptualized as interrelated strata of meaning within the Cognosystem, whose structure and dynamism are closely linked to the previously analyzed narrative hierarchy. These layers operate within an ecosystemic framework that places

them at different levels: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. This organization not only determines the degree of influence a narrative can exert, but also the mechanisms through which it can ascend, descend, or permeate different layers of the Cognosystem.

From this perspective, the narrative hierarchy functions as a validation filter within each ecosystemic level. Narratives that emerge in the microsystem (individual level) may consolidate within the mesosystem (group or community context) and ascend to the exosystem (institutions and media) if they manage to align with socially legitimized frameworks of meaning. Ultimately, those narratives that reach the macrosystem become structuring forces of large-scale social reality. However, this process can also operate in reverse: formerly dominant narratives may lose legitimacy and be relegated to lower levels when they face crises of validation.

A paradigmatic example of this process is the narrative of "economic progress based on consumption," which, having historically been a dominant narrative within the global narrative hierarchy, has permeated multiple layers within the Cognosystem. At the macrosystemic level, this narrative has been promoted by governmental institutions, corporations, and media outlets, becoming a hegemonic interpretive framework. However, at the exosystemic and mesosystemic levels, alternative narratives related to sustainability and the circular economy have emerged, challenging its dominance. As these narratives gain traction in the lower levels, their growing influence within the Cognosystem could facilitate the displacement of the hegemonic narrative toward a position of lesser impact, or even its reconfiguration in response to new social demands.

The transmission of these strata of meaning is not limited to verbal communication; rather, it materializes through symbols, rituals, public policies, and institutions. In this way, the interplay among narrative layers, narrative hierarchy, and ecosystemic levels explains how hegemonic narratives can be challenged by emerging narratives that seek to reshape the structural configuration of the Cognosystem by positioning themselves within layers of greater influence. In this process, factors such as legitimacy, institutionalization, and adaptability play a key role in the persistence or transformation of a narrative within the Cognosystem. These layers not only organize narratives according to their scope and impact, but also determine the mechanisms by which narratives rise or fall within the narrative hierarchy.

Multidimensionality and contextualization

As explained in the previous section, within the TCCR, narrative layers do not operate at a single level, but instead traverse multiple dimensions of the Cognosystem. These are structured according to the principles of narrative hierarchy and organized across the ecosystemic levels: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. This multidimensionality allows narratives to transcend their immediate origins and become embedded in various spheres of social interaction, generating processes of legitimization, adaptation, and transformation.

At the microsystem level, narratives operate within the individual and immediate sphere, influencing subjective perception and direct interpersonal interactions, as is the

case with family or educational narratives during childhood. At the mesosystem level, these narratives find points of connection with community and group structures, generating shared value systems and cultural configurations that can either reinforce or challenge dominant narratives.

The exosystem constitutes an intermediate level where narratives, although not directly experienced by individuals, exert structural influence through institutions, media, and regulations that mediate the interaction between the preceding levels and macrosystemic structures. Finally, the macrosystem represents the level at which hegemonic narratives are consolidated, operating as interpretive frameworks of reality that organize social meaning on a large scale and structure the dominant narrative hierarchy.

This multilayered organization allows for the analysis of how narratives can ascend from individual layers to broader social structures, as well as how hegemonic narratives influence the configuration of particular narratives within specific contexts. The dialogue between these levels enables a deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of narrative layers and their relationship with narrative hierarchy within the TCCR.

For example, a narrative about "the importance of saving" may emerge at the individual level and expand into the family sphere, influencing household economic decisions. If this narrative is promoted within the educational system and supported by state policies, its impact can reach the institutional and political dimensions, leading to government incentives to encourage saving and the development of financial regulations. At a global level, this narrative may be integrated into discourses on macroeconomic stability and sustainable development, demonstrating the capacity of a narrative to permeate various layers of the Cognosystem.

The adaptability of a narrative to its context determines its permanence or displacement within the narrative hierarchy. Narratives that fail to respond to contextual changes tend to be displaced or reinterpreted at lower levels.

Permeability of the layers

Narrative layers exhibit high permeability, allowing narratives to migrate across different levels of the Cognosystem. This phenomenon implies that narratives initially considered marginal can gain collective relevance and become dominant discourses, while hegemonic narratives may dissolve or fragment in response to the emergence of new discursive configurations. The permeability of the layers not only facilitates the movement of narrative systems within the cognosystemic hierarchy, but also determines the relationship between the various ecosystemic levels in which these systems of meaning operate.

As previously explained, narratives that emerge within the microsystem—that is, the individual sphere and realm of immediate experience—can ascend within the narrative hierarchy if they manage to align with discourses at the mesosystem level, where community and group interactions reinforce or challenge prevailing narratives. In turn, the exosystem functions as a level of structural mediation, where institutions, media, and policies regulate the dissemination of narratives that may eventually consolidate at the macrosystem level. At this level, narratives reach their highest degree of influence by becoming dominant interpretative frameworks that shape the intersubjective perception of reality among

people at large.

The permeability of the layers also implies that narratives do not move in a linear fashion; they can shift upward, downward, or horizontally within the Cognosystem, depending on processes of social validation and discursive legitimization. For example, an initially emerging narrative around "remote work and labor flexibility" began within the microsystem of individual workers, was later adopted by workplace communities in the mesosystem, and eventually reached exosystemic and institutional levels that led to regulatory and labor policy changes at the macrosystem level.

Likewise, permeability allows for the fragmentation and reconfiguration of hegemonic narratives in response to emerging discourses. This occurs through strategies of discursive deconstruction and the rearticulation of meanings, generating a scenario of symbolic contestation within the Cognosystem and enabling the constant reconfiguration of the narrative hierarchy.

Interaction and movement between cognosystemic layers

The dynamic of interaction and mobility between cognosystemic layers in the TCCR is an intrinsically complex process, characterized by the constant reconfiguration of meanings and the ongoing struggle for discursive legitimacy across different levels of the Cognosystem. Narratives do not remain fixed within a specific layer; instead, they undergo upward, downward, and horizontal movements depending on their adaptability, the emergence of systemic crises, and the influence of actors with discursive agency.

Each narrative layer plays a structuring role in the construction of interpretive frameworks, acting as a filter through which narratives are either validated or delegitimized. Its interaction with the narrative hierarchy of the Cognosystem allows for an understanding of the processes through which certain narratives gain centrality within the social fabric, while others are relegated to the margins or suppressed in their attempt to gain recognition.

Upward and downward movement

The upward movement of a narrative occurs when it transitions from a marginal position within the Cognosystem to a higher level of legitimacy and influence. This ascent is conditioned by factors such as emotional resonance, institutionalization, the capacity to articulate with pre-existing power structures, and its adaptability to emerging social demands and expectations. When a narrative becomes legitimized in higher layers, it can influence the configuration of norms, values, and social structures that govern collective behavior, ultimately transforming into a structuring axis of the Cognosystem.

Historical examples of narrative ascension include the recognition of labor rights during the Industrial Era, which evolved from a localized demand (microsystem and mesosystem) into a framework supported by governmental institutions and international organizations (exosystem and macrosystem). This process was driven by mass strikes, the

involvement of influential political actors, and the institutionalization of legal mechanisms that consolidated the narrative of workers' rights within the economic and social order. Another illustrative case is the rise of the narrative of "anthropogenic climate change", which initially emerged within scientific and activist circles but has since scaled to become a central axis of environmental policies and multilateral agreements on a global level. Its ascension has been facilitated by the accumulation of empirical evidence, the pressure exerted by social movements, and institutional responses in the form of environmental regulations.

In contrast, downward movement occurs when a previously dominant narrative loses legitimacy and is displaced to lower levels of the Cognosystem. This can result from shifts in collective perception, internal contradictions within the narrative, systemic crises, or the emergence of alternative discourses with greater adaptive capacity. Such transitions are often gradual, but during periods of accelerated crisis, the fall of a narrative can be abrupt, creating a discursive void that is then filled by new narrative configurations.

A paradigmatic example of downward movement is the weakening of the narrative of the "superiority of traditional media," which has been eroded by the rise of decentralized digital platforms and increasing skepticism toward media impartiality. In this case, the hegemonic narrative of journalistic objectivity has been displaced by emerging discourses centered on the democratization of information and the active participation of audiences in shaping news narratives. This narrative decline has not only reconfigured the structure of the media landscape but has also transformed the interpretive codes through which reality is understood in the public sphere, generating new struggles over informational legitimacy within the Cognosystem.

In summary, the upward and downward movement of narratives is a continuous phenomenon that depends on the interaction between power structures, social actors, and historical contexts. These transitions affect the symbolic organization of intersubjective reality and shape the frameworks through which societies interpret and respond to their collective challenges.

Horizontal interaction between layers

Narratives can also undergo horizontal displacements within the same layer, resulting in discursive adaptations without necessarily changing their hierarchical position. As previously discussed, this type of lateral interaction allows different narratives to influence one another, giving rise to processes of hybridization, re-signification, and conceptual fusion, thereby contributing to the evolution of the Cognosystem without causing an abrupt alteration of its hierarchical structure.

Horizontal interaction manifests in various forms, ranging from the coexistence of complementary narratives to the tension generated by discourses competing to redefine the meaning of a socially accepted concept. A relevant example of horizontal interaction is the convergence between the narrative of the "collaborative economy" and that of "responsible consumption." While both emerged as responses to traditional economic models, their interaction has given rise to new production and consumption practices that combine elements from both perspectives, generating an intermediate narrative around "economic

and social sustainability." This interaction process has enabled the consolidation of platforms that balance equitable access to goods and services with the promotion of conscious and environmentally sustainable consumption.

Likewise, in the educational field, the interaction between the narrative of "formal education" and that of "self-directed learning" has led to the proliferation of hybrid teaching models, where traditional institutions have incorporated digital and self-guided methodologies to adapt to the needs of the 21st century. This evolution has not only brought about a shift in the conception of learning, but also redefined the roles of teachers and students, enabling the co-construction of knowledge and the decentralization of expertise.

Another significant example is the interaction between the narrative of "conventional health" and that of "alternative medicine." Initially, these discourses were presented as antagonistic, but over time they have created spaces of interaction in which biomedical approaches are combined with complementary practices, promoting integrative health models. This process illustrates how horizontal interactions can expand the range of discursive possibilities without necessarily altering the hierarchical structure of the narratives.

This type of lateral interaction demonstrates that the transformation of the Cognosystem does not always occur through direct confrontations between narratives, but also through processes of negotiation, adaptation, and convergence. These dynamics allow for the progressive evolution of the narrative framework without causing abrupt fractures in the hierarchy of the Cognosystem.

Friction and tensions between layers

The interaction between narrative layers is not always harmonious; in many cases, it generates frictions that can escalate into large-scale systemic crises. These tensions often emerge when narratives from different hierarchical levels compete for hegemony within the Cognosystem, or when previously dominant discourses are challenged by emerging narratives with high transformative power. Such frictions not only reflect ideological divergences but also represent struggles for control over social meaning, where different actors seek to impose their interpretation of reality.

An illustrative example of this dynamic is the tension between the narrative of "economic growth based on fossil fuels" and the narrative of "sustainable energy transition." While the former has served as the structural foundation of modern industrial economies (macrosystem), the latter has gained traction at the exosystemic and mesosystemic levels through the pressure of environmental movements, scientific research, and international regulations. As empirical evidence and regulatory changes strengthen the validity of the energy transition, resistance arises from industrial and political sectors seeking to preserve the status quo. This friction has triggered a process of narrative reconfiguration in which both positions compete for control over the global interpretive framework, giving rise to intermediate narratives that seek to balance economic growth with sustainability.

Likewise, in the cultural sphere, the tension between the narrative of a "homogeneous national identity" and that of "cultural pluralism" has been a point of conflict in various societies. While the former has been promoted by state institutions and macrosystemic structures through policies of linguistic and heritage unification, the latter has gained

strength in the mesosystem and exosystem through social activism, the recognition of minority rights, and the globalization of democratic values. These frictions have led to the emergence of hybrid discourses that attempt to reconcile the preservation of national traditions with the incorporation of cultural diversity as a fundamental social value.

In certain scenarios, these frictions can trigger narrative crises that lead to the reconfiguration of power structures within the Cognosystem. A paradigmatic case is the tension between the narrative of "unquestionable institutional authority" and the emerging narrative of "transparency and citizen participation." As advances in technology and communication have enabled more immediate access to information, there has been a growing demand for accountability and citizen oversight of political decision-making. This has generated conflicts between traditional governmental structures seeking to preserve their narrative control and social movements advocating for greater decentralization of power.

Ultimately, frictions and tensions between narrative layers are structural elements of the Cognosystem, as they function as catalysts for social and discursive change. Far from being mere semantic disputes, these tensions reflect deeper struggles over the configuration of the social, economic, and political order, determining which narratives become consolidated, which are transformed, and which are pushed to the discursive periphery.

Mechanisms of friction between cognosystemic layers

Narrative frictions within the Cognosystem emerge when narratives from different hierarchical levels—with divergent interpretive frameworks and asymmetric power relations—come into conflict within a process of discursive negotiation. The intensity and direction of the conflict depend on the relative position of the narratives within the hierarchical structure of the Cognosystem, as well as on their interaction with the ecosystemic layers (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem).

The following are the most frequent mechanisms that generate narrative frictions and constitute fundamental vectors in the dynamics of discursive change:

- **Misalignment of values and objectives:** Misalignment of values or objectives occurs when divergent narratives promote incompatible views of reality in terms of their normative and teleological principles. These tensions often arise between hierarchical levels of the Cognosystem that seek discursive hegemony within their respective domains of influence.

  For example, within the microsystem, an individual may uphold a narrative of self-determination and meritocratic success, while the macrosystem may be dominated by a narrative that emphasizes state regulation as a mechanism for equity and social cohesion. This misalignment generates conflicts in the construction of political and economic discourses, affecting perceptions of social mobility and access to opportunities.

  In the educational context, a tension can be observed between the mesosystem—where academic institutions promote the narrative of individual effort as a means of self-improvement—and the governmental exosystem, which

promotes narratives of educational equity based on universal access and the elimination of structural gaps. When these narratives interact in the design of public policies, conflicts may arise around the implementation of mechanisms for academic selection and evaluation.

- **Ideological incompatibility:** Ideological frictions emerge when interpretive frameworks with antagonistic principles enter into dispute over the domination of a narrative space. This phenomenon is especially evident in the political and cultural arenas, where different actors attempt to impose their worldview on others.

  In the political macrosystem, for instance, the narrative of state interventionism may come into conflict with the free market narrative upheld by the business exosystem. While the former emphasizes redistribution and the role of the state as a regulator of the economic system, the latter prioritizes competition and the autonomy of market agents.

  When these narratives compete for hegemony without effective institutional mediation mechanisms in the mesosystem, processes of extreme polarization may arise. In democratic contexts, these tensions manifest in legislative debates and electoral processes, whereas in authoritarian regimes they may lead to the suppression of alternative discourses through censorship, propaganda, and political coercion.

- **Contextual crisis and Cognosystem reconfiguration:** Contextual crises constitute one of the most disruptive mechanisms in the reconfiguration of the Cognosystem, as they destabilize dominant narratives and facilitate the emergence of alternative discourses.

  In scenarios of global economic crises, for example, the hegemonic narrative of sustained growth and financial stability within the macrosystem may collapse, creating a discursive vacuum that allows for the rise of emerging narratives centered on protectionism, financial regulation, or alternative economic systems. The breakdown of narrative stability in such cases often leads to a realignment within the discursive hierarchy of the Cognosystem.

  At the mesosystem level, a crisis of institutional trust—such as a governmental corruption scandal—can undermine the narrative of state legitimacy and fragment political discourse. In this context, narratives that promote the decentralization of power and citizen participation may gain traction within the media exosystem and consolidate in the macrosystem as alternative models for institutional reorganization.

  A significant example of contextual crisis was the Great Recession of 2008, which weakened the dominant narrative regarding the efficiency of the free market and facilitated the rise of discourses advocating financial regulation, redistribution, and economic protectionism. Within the Cognosystem, this narrative shift was reflected in the reformulation of public policies and in the reconfiguration of global political discourse.

Consequently, narrative frictions are not merely discursive conflicts, but structural dynamics that continuously shape the evolution of the Cognosystem. The misalignment of

values, ideological incompatibility, and contextual crises act as catalysts of narrative change, reconfiguring the discursive hierarchy and enabling the emergence, adaptation, or displacement of narratives across different levels of the system.

Understanding these mechanisms is essential for analyzing the evolution of discourses within the TCCR and for designing intervention strategies that facilitate the adaptation and transformation of the Cognosystem in contexts of high structural complexity. A narrative's ability to maintain its position within the hierarchy—or to shift within it—will depend on its capacity to respond to contextual changes, integrate new meanings, and align with power structures that reinforce its position within the dynamics of social discourse.

Dynamism and reconfiguration of the Cognosystem

As emphasized in previous sections, the Cognosystem is not a fixed structure but rather a network of narrative systems in constant reconfiguration, existing in a state of continuous flux—adapting, mutating, or disappearing according to its capacity to respond to sociocultural and structural changes. Its dynamism is expressed in the emergence of new narratives, the adaptation of previously established discourses, and the obsolescence of interpretive frameworks that lose their ability to explain social reality. These changes are neither random nor spontaneous; they are mediated by the interaction among different narrative levels and by the actions of actors with discursive agency, who seek to reconfigure the Cognosystem according to their interests and strategic objectives.

This process of reconfiguration is also conditioned by technological evolution, which can accelerate the spread or erode the relevance of certain narratives. Access to new media and the development of digital technologies have enabled previously marginalized narratives to disseminate rapidly and be adopted by broad sectors of society. Similarly, the Cognosystem responds to fluctuations in power structures, where hegemonic narratives must be constantly renewed or reformulated in order to maintain their dominant position within the narrative hierarchy.

The capacity of relational dynamics among cognosystemic narrative systems to reorganize without abrupt fractures depends on their intrinsic flexibility and their ability to absorb emerging narratives within their preexisting structures. Not all narratives that emerge within the Cognosystem succeed in consolidating; many are assimilated into dominant discourses without substantially altering the established narrative order. However, in scenarios of systemic crisis, it is possible for a disruptive narrative to alter existing interpretive frameworks, leading to a radical reordering of the narrative hierarchy.

As a global conclusion of the present chapter, it can be stated that the dynamic of cognosystemic layers, within the framework of the TCCR, constitutes a fundamental analytical axis for understanding the structuring, interaction, and transformation of narratives within the Cognosystem. These layers operate as interdependent levels that not only distribute meaning across different discursive domains but also mediate the relationship between epistemological structures and social configurations. The hierarchization of discourses within this framework responds to processes of legitimation and symbolic contestation, where the stability of narratives is subject to sociocultural validation dynamics and

shifting historical circumstances.

The dynamic nature of narratives is manifested in their constant movement across these levels, allowing for the emergence of new discourses, the consolidation of hegemonic accounts, and the obsolescence of previously established narratives. The fluidity of these narrative shifts is conditioned by structural determinants, disruptive sociohistorical events, and the actions of actors with discursive agency. In this sense, the transformation of interpretive frameworks within the various ecosystemic strata of the Cognosystem is a dialectical process, in which emerging narratives may subvert the status quo or be co-opted by preexisting discursive structures.

The permeability of these layers is a determining factor in the circulation of discourses and the reconfiguration of symbolic structures. Narratives that are initially peripheral may ascend within the narrative hierarchy and attain centrality, while others—previously dominant—may fragment, adapt, or be displaced in the face of emerging discursive configurations. The interaction between layers allows not only for the vertical movement—upward or downward—of narratives, but also for their horizontal displacement, enabling processes of hybridization and semantic re-signification. Thus, the study of narrative layers in the TCCR provides a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms that regulate the production and transformation of meaning in society.

Friction between narrative layers constitutes a critical factor in the evolution of the Cognosystem, as it reveals ideological tensions, axiological misalignments, and contextual crises that reconfigure the discursive hierarchy. These frictions not only represent struggles for symbolic hegemony but also function as vectors of structural change, fostering the emergence of new interpretive frameworks and destabilizing previously established discourses. When discursive tensions reach critical levels, they may lead to a radical recomposition of systems of meaning, implying a reformulation of social organization and the structures of narrative power.

In summary, the analysis of the dynamic of cognosystemic layers provides a robust epistemological framework for understanding the evolution of narratives within the Cognosystem. The interconnection between discursive structures, ecosystemic levels, and mechanisms of legitimation not only allows for the anticipation of changes in the narrative landscape, but also enables the design of intervention strategies that facilitate the adaptation and evolution of narrative systems in increasingly complex scenarios. The ability to interpret these discursive interactions is crucial for developing theoretical and methodological approaches that make effective intervention possible in the configuration of social and cultural meaning.

8. THE "MEME" AS A VEHICLE OF MEANING IN THE TCCR

THE COGNOSYSTEMIC MEME emerges as an innovative theoretical construct proposed by the TCCR, which, within this framework, is understood as the elementary unit of transmissibility, mutability, and propagation of narrative systems within the core of the Cognosystem. Its structural function facilitates the articulation of narratives across the different ecosystemic levels (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem), enabling not only their continuity but also their reconfiguration in response to transformations in the sociocultural and political environment.

Derived from the theoretical concept of the "meme" coined by Richard Dawkins, the "cognosystemic meme" expands its original meaning by integrating into a cybernetic and systemic structure, where its existence is not limited to the mechanical replication of cultural content. Instead, it acquires the capacity to interact with other narratives, hybridize meanings, and alter interpretive paradigms within the Cognosystem.

Conceptualization, fundamental components, and memetic typology

Concept

Cognosystemic memes possess specific characteristics that distinguish them from other types of information transmission units. These features allow memes, within the con-

text of the TCCR, to function as effective vehicles for the mobility and evolution of meanings across the different narrative systems within the Cognosystem.

CONCEPT:

Cognosystemic Meme: A unit of meaning strategically designed to operate as a vehicle of narrative influence within the Cognosystem. Its primary function is to facilitate the transmission, transformation, and consolidation of systems of meaning that shape the experience and understanding of the world. This unit operates within a logic of strategic interdependence with the different ecosystemic levels (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem), possessing the instrumental capacity to influence the configuration and reconfiguration of intersubjective social representations. In this way, the cognosystemic meme acts as a narrative modulator in diverse contexts, enabling the circulation and adaptation of meanings within the narrative framework that constitutes the Cognosystem.

Unlike other models of cultural transmission, the "cognosystemic meme" is not a merely replicable entity, but a highly plastic relational structure that adapts according to its interaction with other narrative frameworks, allowing for the emergence of new discursive configurations. In this sense, its behavior follows a logic of hybridization, collision, and resignification within the semantic fabric that constitutes the Cognosystem.

Consequently, the "cognosystemic meme" positions itself as a fundamental and highly effective tool for influencing the configuration and transformation of meanings within the Cognosystem. Intentionally designed to operate as a vehicle for the modification of preexisting narratives, its purpose is to alter or consolidate the narrative systems that govern social interactions across different ecosystemic levels.

At the microsystem level, the cognosystemic meme is incorporated within the earliest environments of socialization. For example, a child who assimilates the concept of "responsibility" within their family nucleus is not receiving a static construct, but rather a framework in continuous negotiation. As that concept is confronted with other narratives in school, virtual communities, or the media, the effect of this meme may be reconfigured and adapted according to the context.

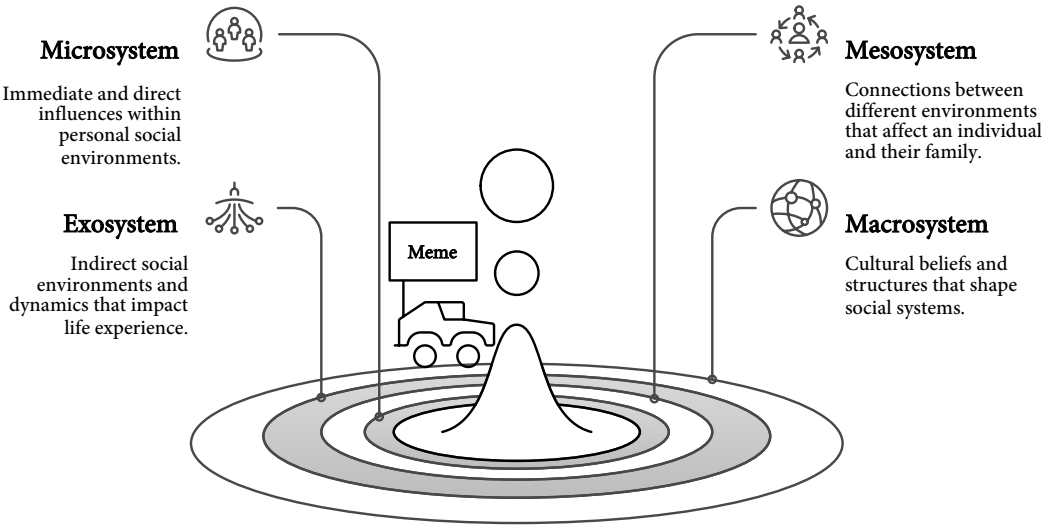
The mesosystem, in turn, functions as a channel of interaction where cognosystemic memes from different microsystems converge, generating spaces for narrative hybridization and contestation. For instance, an individual who has internalized a notion of success—rooted in financial stability—within their microsystem may see that interpretation transformed through interaction with a meme originating from another microsystem, one that promotes a particular appreciation for minimalism and self-sufficiency, persuading the individual both rationally and emotionally by highlighting the benefits of such a

lifestyle for achieving financial success. In this way, the cognosystemic meme is not merely passively received, but is deliberately reconfigured to reinforce or challenge existing narrative structures.

Within the exosystem, regulatory and normative frameworks play a key role in the institutionalization and perpetuation of specific cognosystemic memes. The deliberate incorporation of certain memetic narratives into educational, legislative, or corporate systems is not arbitrary; rather, it reflects intentional strategies of discursive legitimization aimed at shaping specific systems of meaning. For example, the memetic formalization of a discourse on the ethics of flexible work within corporate policies can intentionally consolidate a narrative that promotes individual adaptation to dynamic work environments, thereby displacing other conceptions of employment and economic security.

Finally, the macrosystem establishes the ideological and cultural frameworks within which cognosystemic memes operate, defining the interpretive patterns that shape the structuring of meaning in a society. At this level, the narrative of "progress", for example, has historically been used as a discursive tool to justify specific political and economic models, demonstrating the intentional functionality of tzhe cognosystemic meme in the construction of dominant frameworks of meaning.

Memetic interaction across the different cognosystemic layers


Microsystem
Immediate and direct influences within personal social environments.
Exosystem
Indirect social environments and dynamics that impact life experience.
Meme
Mesosystem
Connections between different environments that affect an individual and their family.
Macrosystem
Cultural beliefs and structures that shape social systems.

Fundamental memetic components

As previously noted, the *cognosystemic meme* constitutes a structural unit within the Cognosystem, whose primary function lies in its capacity to strategically influence the configuration and reconfiguration of preexisting narrative systems. Unlike other forms of spontaneous narrative, this type of meaning system is deliberately designed to introduce, reinforce, or modify discursive structures across different levels of the narrative ecosystem. Its impact is articulated through a set of fundamental components that enable its operability and effectiveness, ensuring its sustainability and evolution over time.

The following section presents the most relevant components of the cognosystemic meme as a narrative system, according to the TCCR:

a. **Semantic core:** As is generally the case in all narrative systems within the TCCR, the semantic core also constitutes the central essence of the cognosystemic meme, representing the fundamental meaning that guides its capacity for narrative influence within the Cognosystem. However, this core proposition does not emerge spontaneously; rather, it is the result of narrative modeling processes aimed at optimizing its propagation and its capacity for re-signification across multiple sociocultural contexts.

   The potential of the semantic core lies in its malleability, which allows it to be appropriated by various narrative agents operating at different levels of the Cognosystem. For instance, the notion of "community resilience" may be employed within a governmental framework to promote policies of social self-management in times of crisis, while in the corporate sphere, it may be articulated through discourses on sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Its flexible structure enables integration into divergent narratives without compromising its original semantic essence. Moreover, this core may acquire multiple interpretations depending on the ecosystemic level in which it is implemented, allowing for adaptive variations that reinforce its persistence over time.

b. **Narrative body:** Every cognosystemic narrative—including the meme—is supported by a narrative body (or *cognitive evaluation*, according to the TCCR), understood as the articulated set of premises that enable multiaxial intrapersonal evaluation: experiential, contextual, emotional, and cognitive. This structure sustains the holistic discursive coherence of a narrative system. In the case of the cognosystemic meme, the narrative body serves as the vehicle that enables the effective and strategic insertion of the memetic semantic core within the Cognosystem.

   The design of the narrative body involves the selection of argumentative structures that facilitate the diffusion and acceptance of the meme across multiple levels of narrative interaction. For example, a meme that promotes the decentralization of knowledge may include references to successful models of alternative education, emotional appeals emphasizing the importance of democratizing access to information, and empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of collaborative networks.

The effectiveness of the narrative body lies in its ability to generate interpretive resonance among target audiences, thereby maximizing its impact and longevity within the Cognosystem. This resonance is reinforced through the incorporation of linguistic strategies that support internalization, such as the use of metaphors, evocative symbols, and repetitive discursive patterns that enhance memorability and dissemination; or through cognitive processes such as *argumentative dialogue*, among others.

c. **Representation format:** The format through which a cognosystemic meme is manifested is crucial to its dissemination and appropriation. The choice of a medium of expression is the result of a strategic analysis of the most effective dissemination channels within a given narrative context.

Formats may include discursive elements (slogans, programmatic statements), visual components (posters, symbolic images), audiovisual materials (propaganda videos, documentary content), or even performative rituals (commemorative acts, institutional ceremonies). The selection of format not only affects the speed and reach of dissemination but also shapes the interpretation of the meme within the cognitive structure of its recipients.

Moreover, cognosystemic memes may incorporate a combination of multiple formats, thereby increasing their adaptability to diverse cultural and technological contexts and maximizing their impact in both the public and private spheres.

d. **Dissemination channels:** The trajectory of a cognosystemic meme within the Cognosystem is conditioned by the dissemination channels that facilitate its propagation. These channels may include mass media, digital networks, educational environments, legislation, and institutional practices—each introducing specific variables that affect the meme's persistence and transformation across different ecosystemic levels.

For example, within the microsystem, a meme may be transmitted through family or community socialization, although today this also occurs through digital media to which individuals have direct access, shaping the initial stages of narrative internalization. In the mesosystem, educational or corporate institutions may reinforce the diffusion of the meme through structured discourses. In the exosystem, regulatory frameworks and public policies can institutionalize the meme, granting it structural legitimacy. Finally, in the macrosystem, the meme may become consolidated as a guiding principle within the dominant cultural narrative.

These channels may also generate ongoing feedback loops that allow for the meme's reformulation in response to new contextual realities, thereby ensuring its narrative sustainability.

e. **Propagation strategy:** The success of a cognosystemic meme depends on its propagation strategy, which may include mechanisms such as digital virality, institutional legitimization, normalization within legislative or educational frameworks, and discursive repetition. Unlike the spontaneous diffusion of conventional narratives, the propagation of the cognosystemic meme follows a strategic design aimed

at optimizing its insertion into the narrative structure of the Cognosystem.

A paradigmatic case is the construction of citizen security narratives. Within the microsystem, a family influenced by advertising campaigns on social insecurity and new home security technologies may install video surveillance devices, thereby reinforcing—at this narrative level—the idea that security is an individual responsibility. In the mesosystem, security companies promote the adoption of these devices through discourses emphasizing personal responsibility in crime prevention. In the exosystem, the implementation of regulations that encourage the use of such technologies contributes to their structural expansion. Finally, in the macrosystem, the normalization of the surveillance discourse perpetuates a narrative paradigm in which protection is internalized as an individual duty, minimizing the role of public institutions in the management of security.

This example illustrates how a propagation strategy not only shapes the narrative structure of a meme but also transforms societal perceptions and behaviors as a whole.

Consequently, cognosystemic memes operate as fundamental devices within the TCCR, enabling the transfer, mutability, and consolidation of meanings within the Cognosystem. Unlike other discursive elements, their intentional design and capacity for insertion across multiple ecosystemic levels make them essential tools for the structuring and modification of social discourses. Their study offers insight into how narratives are designed, disseminated, and re-signified over time, providing an analytical framework for examining their impact on the construction of social reality.

Moreover, the structural flexibility of the cognosystemic meme ensures its persistence within narrative ecosystems, adapting to sociocultural changes through strategies of re-signification and discursive reinforcement.

Memetic typology

In line with the above, cognosystemic memes can be classified into three main categories: *consolidation memes*, *friction memes*, and *transition memes*—each with its own dynamics of propagation, resistance, and re-signification within the Cognosystem:

1. **Consolidation memes:** Consolidation memes serve to reinforce and perpetuate hegemonic narrative structures, functioning as devices that legitimize dominant interpretive frameworks. Their effectiveness lies in their ability to disseminate across multiple narrative levels, ensuring sustainability through strategies such as discursive repetition, institutionalization, and validation by actors with symbolic authority.

   At the microsystem level, these memes are internalized through early education and primary socialization, shaping the cognitive foundations of individual beliefs. A clear example is the narrative of meritocracy, which upholds the idea that success is solely the result of individual effort. In the mesosystem, academic insti-

tutions and workplaces reproduce this narrative through evaluation systems, performance metrics, and institutional discourses that reinforce self-sufficiency as a guiding principle. Within the exosystem, media and advertising consolidate this notion through aspirational representations that downplay structural barriers to success. Finally, in the macrosystem, the meritocratic principle is translated into public policies and socioeconomic models that legitimize structural inequalities under the assumption of equal opportunities for all.

2. **Friction memes:** Friction memes represent a rupture with dominant discourses, functioning as catalysts of narrative conflict and semiotic destabilization within the Cognosystem. Their purpose is not merely to antagonize hegemonic interpretive frameworks, but to create a space of contestation in which alternative counter-narratives can emerge.

   At the microsystem level, these memes may originate in academic circles, spaces of intellectual dissent, or emerging social movements. For example, various memes that have recently emerged to raise awareness about the climate crisis or global warming stand in opposition to the paradigm of unlimited economic growth, proposing the need for a radical reconfiguration of the development model. In the mesosystem, activist networks, scientific communities, and independent media amplify this memetic narrative, generating a discourse of resistance against the indiscriminate extraction of natural resources. Within the exosystem, these memes come into conflict with regulatory frameworks and corporate interests that seek to uphold traditional economic structures, giving rise to political disputes and normative tensions. Finally, in the macrosystem, the climate crisis narrative has managed to gain partial consolidation in international agreements, although its implementation remains constrained by the resistance of economic sectors entrenched in extractivist paradigms.

3. **Transition memes:** Transition memes operate as vectors of gradual reconfiguration within the Cognosystem, facilitating the shift of dominant narrative frameworks without causing an abrupt rupture in the established discursive structure. Unlike friction memes, which directly confront hegemonic narratives, transition memes aim for the progressive adaptation of discourses, allowing for the temporary coexistence of evolving narrative systems.

   At the microsystem level, these memes may emerge in experimental settings, where emerging practices begin to integrate into traditional frameworks. A relevant example is the narrative of the sharing economy, which was initially conceived as an alternative to traditional market models. In the mesosystem, digital platforms and business networks facilitated its expansion, promoting the idea of resource sharing over individual ownership. Within the exosystem, the regulation of these models required a process of normative adaptation that allowed for their integration into conventional legal frameworks without completely disrupting the prevailing economic system. Finally, at the macrosystem level, the sharing economy has been absorbed into the dynamics of global capitalism, evolving into a hybrid model that coexists with traditional economic structures without fully displacing them.

In conclusion, the typology of cognosystemic memes in the TCCR allows for the analysis of the dynamics of stability and transformation within narrative systems in the Cognosystem. Consolidation memes ensure the persistence of hegemonic discursive structures through their reproduction across various narrative levels. Friction memes destabilize dominant paradigms, creating space for the emergence of new interpretations and discursive resistances. Transition memes, in turn, facilitate the transformation of discourses without causing abrupt ruptures, allowing for the gradual reconfiguration of the interpretive frameworks in which they operate.

Fundamental characteristics of the cognosystemic meme

The cognosystemic meme is a type of narrative system intentionally designed to influence other narrative systems within the Cognosystem. Its purpose goes beyond the mere transmission of information; it is oriented toward the alteration of preexisting interpretive frameworks and discursive structures. Unlike spontaneous or traditionally accepted narratives, cognosystemic memes are the result of deliberate design and operate with a specific strategic objective. They manifest in formats such as advertising, slogans, institutional missions, and cultural myths, among others—serving as tools of influence aimed at consolidating or challenging narratives across different levels of the Cognosystem.

From the perspective of the TCCR, these memes play a structural role in the configuration of psychosocial reality, functioning as mechanisms that regulate the fluidity of ideas and ensure the insertion of specific discourses into diversified narrative environments. Their analysis makes it possible to understand the dynamics of transformation underlying many dominant narratives and their influence on the reconstruction of the Cognosystem.

Internarrative transmission

Cognosystemic memes are articulated within complex narrative networks, functioning as vectors of meaning that not only transmit information but also re-signify and reconfigure it in the process. Their intentional nature sets them apart from other narrative systems, as they do not emerge spontaneously within the Cognosystem, but are strategically designed to influence collective perception and transform social discourses across different levels. The transmission of these memes follows a planned logic, in which meanings are not only absorbed and reinterpreted by recipients, but can also be modified according to the interests and power structures that govern each narrative context.

The process of internarrative transmission is not unidirectional; rather, it involves multiple feedback loops across the different levels of the Cognosystem. At the microsystem level, a cognosystemic meme may be introduced through everyday interactions, influencing the construction of individual identities and values. At the mesosystem level, educational, corporate, or community institutions serve as platforms for amplifying the meme,

adapting it to their own interpretive frameworks. In the exosystem, its dissemination may be reinforced by public policies, mass communication strategies, or regulations that facilitate its integration into the social structure. Finally, at the macrosystem level, the most successful memes become consolidated as hegemonic discourses, shaping society's perception of reality and the symbolic production of meaning as a whole.

For example, the slogan "Progress for all" is not merely a persuasive phrase, but a strategically designed narrative tool intended to embed the notions of equity and development as structural pillars of political and economic discourse. At the microsystem level, it may influence individual perceptions of social mobility and personal effort; at the mesosystem level, its repetition in educational and workplace settings reinforces its institutional legitimacy; within the exosystem, it can be integrated into regulatory frameworks that govern the distribution of resources and opportunities; and at the macrosystem level, its narrative success turns it into a guiding axis of common sense, shaping the way a nation or social group conceives its own development.

In summary, the internarrative transmission of the cognosystemic meme involves not only its movement across different levels of the Cognosystem, but also functions as a mechanism of discursive reconfiguration with high transformative potential. The effectiveness of this transmission depends on the structural coherence of the meme, its ability to adapt to various narrative spheres, and the social validation it receives at each level. Thus, the cognosystemic meme operates as a fundamental tool for the structuring and modification of narrative systems, ensuring its influence on the psychosocial and cultural evolution of both individuals and collectives.

Memetic mutation capacity

A fundamental structural characteristic of cognosystemic memes is their capacity for mutation, which enables them to maintain their effectiveness as contextual conditions evolve and interpretive frameworks transform. This process should not be understood as an arbitrary alteration, but rather as a strategic reconfiguration that responds to the need to maximize their impact within the Cognosystem. Given their intentional design, cognosystemic memes not only persist over time but are also able to adapt to new narrative structures without losing their original purpose of meaning transformation.

The mutation of a cognosystemic meme may respond to various ecosystemic pressures, such as sociopolitical changes, technological innovations, or cultural reconfigurations. This process of narrative adaptability can be observed in the evolution of institutional discourses, advertising slogans, and political doctrines. The capacity for mutation allows these memes to maintain their ability to influence other narrative systems, ensuring their relevance across different levels of the Cognosystem.

For example, the narrative of "innovation and entrepreneurship" has undergone significant mutations over the past decades. Originally designed to attract investors to startup companies in the private sector, it was gradually reformulated to align with public policy discourses focused on economic development. Its reinterpretation within the educational mesosystem has led to its integration into curricula, promoting an entrepreneurial

culture from an early age. In the exosystem, it has been instrumentalized to justify tax incentives and specific regulations that favor investment in technology. Finally, at the macrosystem level, it has mutated into a hegemonic narrative that shapes collective perceptions of economic progress and labor self-sufficiency.

The process of mutation can also be observed in the realm of institutional discourses. A cognosystemic meme such as "sustainable development" has undergone various reformulations in its attempt to adapt to new contexts. Initially associated with environmental preservation, over time it was absorbed into corporate narratives, where its meaning mutated to include economic goals and corporate social responsibility. This transformation responds to the need to maintain its influence within the Cognosystem, ensuring its viability within narrative structures that might otherwise have displaced it.

Finally, this mutational characteristic of cognosystemic memes often occurs automatically, without intentional intervention—an effect directly stemming from the inherently plastic and adaptive nature of this specific type of meaning system. However, in certain contexts, it can also be deliberately manipulated to serve the strategic objectives of the narrative influence in question.

In summary, the mutational capacity of cognosystemic memes serves as a mechanism of survival and adaptability within the Cognosystem. Their flexible nature allows them to integrate into various narrative systems, maximizing their influence in the construction of meaning across diverse sociocultural contexts. Through this dynamic, memes not only sustain their existence but also expand their transformative potential within the global narrative system.

Memetic interaction and evolution

The cognosystemic meme does not operate in isolation; rather, it interacts dynamically with other narrative systems—including other memes—within a process of systemic interdependence. Its evolution is not a random phenomenon but a structured mechanism that responds to the need to consolidate itself within the Cognosystem through the integration, confrontation, or displacement of preexisting narratives. The interaction between cognosystemic memes and other narrative systems is key to their validation and permanence, as the acceptance, resistance, or assimilation of a meme is determined by its compatibility with already established discourses, its capacity for adaptability, and its resonance within specific sociohistorical contexts.

Cognosystemic memes can interact with other narratives—including other cognosystemic memes—in three main ways: through fusion, competition, or narrative absorption:

- **Fusion:** This occurs, for example, when two memes are integrated to form a new narrative structure with reinforced influence, combining shared elements. An example of this is the convergence between the memetic narrative of "sustainable development" and that of "responsible consumption", which gave rise to campaigns such as the slogan *"Unidos contra la basura"* [United against waste] from

the Proyecto LIBERA, led by SEO/BirdLife and Ecoembes in Spain.[2] Active since 2017, this campaign seeks to raise awareness about the need to reduce consumption in order to promote environmental sustainability, reinforcing the synergy between both narratives by re-signifying the act of consumption as an action with direct ecological consequences. This slogan—or meme—has been promoted through digital media and in environmental outreach spaces such as ecological forums and specialized publications, making it a clear example of highly effective memetic fusion.

- **Competition:** This occurs when one meme seeks to displace another within the Cognosystem. A clear example is the struggle between the narratives of "free market" and "planned economy." This competition has reemerged in political and economic debates, particularly in Europe and the United States, where the ultraliberal narrative—shaped by the ideas of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman—advocates for deregulation and the minimization of the State's role. In contrast, Keynesian positions call for active state intervention to regulate the economy and mitigate economic crises. This ideological confrontation has been reflected in the economic reforms promoted by Liz Truss's government in the United Kingdom in 2022, as well as in proposals from progressive sectors in the U.S. that aim to strengthen public spending for income redistribution.

- **Absorption:** This occurs when a hegemonic meme incorporates elements of a subaltern meme, reconfiguring it to fit within its preexisting structure. A paradigmatic case is the appropriation of the "social innovation" discourse within corporate responsibility models. One example is the Spanish multinational Inditex S.A., which has integrated the sustainability narrative into its operational structure through initiatives implemented at its headquarters in Arteijo, in the Spanish province of La Coruña, since 2016. These initiatives emphasize local product consumption, water and packaging reuse, and the promotion of regenerative agriculture as strategies aligned with its Responsabilidad Social Empresarial [Corporate social responsibility] (RSE for its acronym in Spanish) policy. The company's motto in this regard is: *"At Inditex, we are committed to protecting people, the planet, and its ecosystems—a commitment that goes beyond borders and industry limits."*[3] By incorporating these elements, the company aligns itself with current hegemonic market narratives while absorbing the discursive appeal of environmentally concerned consumers—without fundamentally altering its core economic model.

The success of a cognosystemic meme in its interaction with other narratives depends on multiple factors, including its capacity for semantic adaptation, its insertion into discursive transmission networks, and its legitimization within spheres of power. An illustrative example of this process is the evolution of the sociocultural meme of "food sovereignty," which has undergone transformations through its interaction with other memes related to international trade, food security, and sustainable development.

[2] https://proyectolibera.org/
[3] https://www.inditex.com/itxcomweb/es/sostenibilidad#mas-alla

In various contexts, this meme has been adopted by international movements that promote local production, such as the organization "Vía Campesina", which emphasizes self-sufficiency and the reduction of dependence on global trade. This organization has coined memetic slogans such as *"Globalize the struggle, globalize hope,"* employing narrative strategies rooted in the emancipatory demands of peasants from different regions of the world. Furthermore, it has promoted the recognition of their rights within power narratives, such as the United Nations declarations on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. Through this work of discursive advocacy, the organization has succeeded in articulating a network of more than 182 international organizations and over 200 million members, composed of rural workers from around the globe.[4]

In other cases, this discursive influence on local production has been reconfigured by marketing strategies employed in regions such as Europe, where origin certification has served as a commercial differentiator within the mass consumer market, reinforcing brands that appeal to the traceability and authenticity of their products.

This capacity for interaction demonstrates that cognosystemic memes are not fixed or static structures, but active elements within the narrative fabric of the Cognosystem, subject to ongoing processes of re-signification and re-elaboration. Their evolution is the result of a dynamic of discursive negotiations that unfolds through co-optation, reformulation, and symbolic contestation, thereby ensuring their relevance and effectiveness within the narrative environment in which they are embedded.

Consequently, the study of the interaction and evolution of cognosystemic memes offers deeper insight into the narrative transformation logics that govern the construction and reconfiguration of the Cognosystem as a whole.

Memetic shaping of the Cognosystem

The cognosystemic meme, as a specific type of narrative system, not only has an immediate impact in terms of the insertion and transformation of preexisting specific narratives, but also functions as a powerful agent of structural transformation of the Cognosystem as a whole. Its intentional design allows it to modify narrative hierarchies by introducing new discourses capable of displacing dominant interpretive paradigms and consolidating new structures of meaning. Its ability to influence existing narrative structures lies in its strategic design, which is aimed at the reconfiguration of symbolic and discursive frameworks across the various levels or layers of the Cognosystem.

Memetic shaping at the cognosystemic level involves a process of re-signification of hegemonic discourses and the insertion of new narratives aimed at reorganizing shared meaning within the various human groups that make up a society. This process does not occur uniformly or instantaneously; rather, it unfolds within a dynamic interplay involving the resistance of preexisting narratives, the social acceptance of the new discourse, and the meme's ability to permeate different levels of the Cognosystem.

At the microsystem level, cognosystemic memes can produce changes in individual interpretive structures, allowing for the reconfiguration of meaning frameworks within

[4] https://viacampesina.org/es/de-mons-al-mundo-la-via-campesina-celebra-30-anos-globalizando-la-lucha-campesina-y-la-solidaridad/

everyday discourse. At the mesosystem level, institutions act as vehicles for the meme's validation, ensuring its dissemination within educational and professional environments. In the exosystem, institutional policies and regulations can consolidate the meme as part of normative frameworks, legitimizing its influence on social organization. Finally, at the macrosystem level, the meme becomes established as a new interpretive paradigm that transforms the collective understanding of reality.

For example, the concept of "disruptive education" was introduced as an alternative narrative within academic and governmental discourse with the aim of challenging traditional educational models. Initially, its impact was limited to innovative educational communities (microsystem), but over time, its deliberate use in pedagogical strategies and educational policies led to its consolidation within the mesosystem, achieving integration into teacher training and professional development programs. Subsequently, its influence in the exosystem became evident in curricular reforms and legislation aimed at making teaching models more flexible. Finally, at the macrosystem level, the concept attained a hegemonic status within the Cognosystem in the global educational sphere, reshaping regulatory frameworks, institutional practices, and narrative structures surrounding learning.

Ultimately, the shaping of the Cognosystem through cognosystemic memes is a process of deliberate intervention in the symbolic architecture of a society. Their capacity to transform existing discourses and consolidate new structures of meaning depends on their intentional design, adaptability, and resonance across the various narrative levels of the Cognosystem. Understanding this process is essential for analyzing how emerging narratives can generate structural changes in the organization of collective meaning and the psychosocial configuration of reality.

Functions of the cognosystemic meme

The cognosystemic meme plays a fundamental role in the operability and evolution of the Cognosystem, functioning as an intentionally designed mechanism aimed at influencing various types of narrative systems. Its deliberate design and its capacity to transmit meanings, mutate, and reorganize discursive structures enable it to act as a vector of transformation, ensuring the dynamism and adaptability of the Cognosystem in response to changes in the social, political, and cultural environment.

Unlike other conventional narrative systems, which may emerge spontaneously or result from unplanned collective processes, cognosystemic memes are strategically designed with the purpose of influencing the perception and symbolic organization of intersubjective reality. As previously noted, they manifest through slogans, institutional missions, myths, advertising campaigns, ideological frameworks, and more—aiming to consolidate, modify, or displace preexisting narratives across different levels of the Cognosystem. Their function lies not only in preserving dominant discursive structures but also in introducing new narratives that reconfigure shared meaning within a community.

Narrative dissemination

Cognosystemic memes are the primary vehicles for narrative dissemination within the Cognosystem, playing a crucial role in the shaping of social reality through their replicative capacity. These intentionally designed narrative systems possess the ability to mobilize meanings across different narrative levels—much like biological viral contagion, which underlies the classical analogy in general memetic theory—ensuring their permeability within the Cognosystem. Their propagation is neither homogeneous nor linear; rather, it is shaped by power structures, the receptive disposition of subjects, and compatibility with preexisting narratives.

An illustrative example of this dynamic is the narrative of "security and surveillance as guarantors of order." At the microsystem level, a well-crafted meme can persuade a citizen to believe that constant surveillance ensures personal well-being through family discourse and everyday experiences. Within the mesosystem, this narrative is reinforced by educational institutions and media outlets that promote security technologies and emphasize the role of the State in crime prevention. In the exosystem, it is reflected in legislation that expands the use of surveillance technologies and strengthens regulatory bodies. Finally, at the macrosystem level, the narrative of security as a collective priority becomes consolidated as a structural principle in the formulation of public policies and in the social acceptance of citizen monitoring and control measures.

Narrative integration

The cognosystemic meme also facilitates the integration of different narratives within the Cognosystem, functioning as a mechanism of intersection and convergence of meanings. Its intentional design enables the hybridization of preexisting discursive elements, giving rise to emerging narratives that may become consolidated as new interpretive frameworks across the various ecosystemic levels. This process of integration not only reconfigures symbolic structures but also establishes patterns of continuity and transformation that ensure the adaptability of the Cognosystem to sociocultural and political change.

The combination of elements from different narrative systems does not occur randomly; rather, it follows dynamics of negotiation and discursive restructuring aimed at generating social cohesion and symbolic stability. In this sense, cognosystemic memes function as reformulation devices that allow for the coexistence of heterogeneous discourses while facilitating the transition between competing narrative models. This process is crucial in contexts of accelerated social transformation, where the need to generate meaning structures that harmonize divergent interests is fundamental to the consolidation of discursive order.

For example, the narrative of "digital connectivity as a synonym for progress" has emerged as a fusion of earlier discourses on technology, economic development, and social inclusion. This type of cognosystemic meme originated in the exosystem, promoted by international organizations and governmental strategies aimed at expanding telecommuni-

cations networks. It was later integrated into the mesosystem through educational institutions and technology corporations that reinforced the idea that internet access is a key factor for personal and professional growth. Over time, its consolidation within the macrosystem has led to its adoption as a non-negotiable value in the formulation of public policies, economic regulations, and investment strategies in digital infrastructure, thus shaping contemporary perceptions of progress and inclusion.

Chronosystemic maintenance of narrative coherence

Although cognosystemic memes possess the capacity to mutate and evolve, they also play a fundamental role in preserving narrative coherence within the Cognosystem. Their stabilizing function lies in their ability to reinforce preexisting interpretive frameworks, ensuring the continuity and operability of central narratives over time—that is, within the *chronosystem*. The replication of certain memes not only perpetuates dominant discursive structures but also acts as a narrative selection filter, where memes that strengthen system cohesion are more likely to remain relevant, while those that generate dissonance may be marginalized or reinterpreted.

In this process, cognosystemic memes function as regulatory elements that ensure the stability of the Cognosystem without hindering its adaptive capacity. Their persistence within the narrative system depends on their ability to integrate with emerging narratives without losing their structural essence. In this way, narrative coherence does not manifest as a state of absolute stasis, but rather as a dynamic equilibrium in which the central structure of the Cognosystem is reinforced through repetition, social validation, and the institutionalization of predominant cognosystemic memes.

For example, the narrative of "the nation as a unified community" has been perpetuated throughout history through the institutionalization of national heroes, the celebration of patriotic holidays, and the reinforcement of identity-based values within the educational system. This cognosystemic meme is replicated from generation to generation, preventing the fragmentation of collective identity structures and becoming consolidated at the chronosystemic level.

Catalyst of narrative change

Finally, cognosystemic memes act as catalysts of narrative change within the Cognosystem, playing an essential role in the reconfiguration of the symbolic ecosystem in which they operate. Through processes of fusion, competition, or absorption with other memes or preexisting narratives, they can challenge hegemonic discourses and facilitate the intentional emergence of new structures of meaning, thereby triggering discursive transformations that can alter not only individual interpretive frameworks but also large-scale collective narrative configurations. This process of change is not merely accidental; it stems from the distinctive qualities of the meme's foundational structure—its ability to adapt to contextual needs, its legitimization within power structures, and its level of replicability within the Cognosystem, among other attributes. In many cases, the narrative

change driven by a cognosystemic meme can generate systemic chain effects that alter the perception of social reality, reconfigure institutions, and redefine the prevailing values of a community—or even of an entire society.

Throughout history, the discourse on "work and productivity" has undergone significant transformations driven by the evolution of the dominant cognosystemic memes of each era. During the Industrial Revolution, these memes associated work with discipline and individual sacrifice, reflecting a productive paradigm based on the intensive exploitation of labor. With the consolidation of labor rights in the twentieth century—driven by the emergence of new memes that promoted a paradigmatic shift in industry—narratives centered on "dignified work" as a pillar of social well-being began to take shape. Today, the rise of automation and remote work has led to a re-signification of the relationship between productivity and quality of life, giving way to new memes that have introduced a new paradigm in labor organization. As is widely recognized, each of these memetic systems has been shaped by diverse interests and has responded to specific objectives within its historical context.

Mechanisms of transformation of the cognosystemic meme

As noted in this chapter, the "cognosystemic meme" in the TCCR plays a central role in the modulation and transformation of narratives within the Cognosystem, functioning as a structure designed to strategically influence shared meanings and the symbolic organization of social reality. Its capacity for mutation and re-signification grants it a structural role in the evolution of narrative systems, allowing discourses to adapt to new sociohistorical, technological, and political conditions. The semantic flexibility of cognosystemic memes ensures their ability to effectively influence the symbolic organization of the Cognosystem, securing both the stability of certain narrative structures and the emergence of new interpretive frameworks.

From a systemic perspective, the transformation of the cognosystemic meme operates at various interconnected levels. At the microsystem level, the individual and everyday reinterpretation of the meme generates semantic variability, allowing it to adjust to the subjectivity of the recipient. At the mesosystem level, the collective reformulation of the meme is shaped by educational, corporate, and community institutions, which influence its meaning according to prevailing power structures and regulatory frameworks. In the exosystem, governmental bodies and economic actors modulate it through regulations, public policies, and communication strategies. Finally, at the macrosystem level, successful cognosystemic memes are consolidated as dominant interpretive frameworks or are displaced by new narrative configurations.

The main mechanisms through which cognosystemic memes transform narratives include:

a. **Cultural contextualization:** Cultural contextualization constitutes a fundamental process in the transformation of the cognosystemic meme, as it allows for its adjustment to sociocultural specificities and its effective insertion within particular

narrative structures. Since the Cognosystem is composed of interconnected narrative systems that vary according to historical, geopolitical, and axiological factors, the meme's ability to adapt to these contexts determines its effectiveness in discourse reconfiguration. This adaptive capacity not only enables the meme to remain operational across different settings but also facilitates its validation within dominant or emerging interpretive frameworks.

The cultural contextualization of the cognosystemic meme is expressed through the re-signification of its content based on the values, beliefs, and power structures of each community. This phenomenon can be observed in the narrative of "individual responsibility" in professional success. For example, in liberal economies, this meme is articulated around meritocracy and self-improvement, reinforcing the notion that individual effort is the primary determinant of personal achievement. However, in societies with more cooperative economic models, the same narrative is reconfigured to emphasize the role of community, equitable access to opportunities, and the importance of support networks in professional development.

Moreover, cultural contextualization is not limited to mere discursive translation; it involves a transformation of the meme's semiotic and pragmatic structure. In some environments, the meme may be integrated through symbols and metaphors that reinforce its meaning within the local worldview. In other cases, it may be appropriated by narrative agents who strategically re-signify it to align its content with the dynamics of social legitimization and the interests of power groups. This narrative adjustment, far from being a simple adaptation, constitutes a mechanism for stabilizing the Cognosystem, in which the cognosystemic meme acts as a mediator between discursive structures undergoing transformation.

b. **Semantic mutation:** Semantic mutation is a key mechanism in the evolutionary dynamic of the cognosystemic meme, allowing for its adaptation and persistence within the Cognosystem through the progressive re-signification of its discursive content. This process is not merely a terminological change, but a conceptual restructuring that can redefine the applicability of the meme in sociopolitical, economic, and cultural contexts, altering its effects on collective perception and the symbolic organization of the Cognosystem.

The phenomenon of semantic mutation can be observed in concepts such as "sustainability," whose meaning has undergone substantial transformations in recent decades. Originally linked to environmental conservation and the rational management of natural resources, its application has expanded into political and economic spheres, becoming a guiding principle for corporate strategies, urban development models, and consumer regulations. As "sustainability" has been integrated into these frameworks, its connotation has oscillated between an ethical imperative for ecological preservation and a discursive resource used to justify corporate practices seeking social legitimacy without significantly altering their productive structures.

This ability of the cognosystemic meme to move across different meanings can also be interpreted as a mechanism of symbolic negotiation within the Cognosystem. Its reinterpretation does not occur randomly but results from the interaction of narrative agents seeking to reformulate the meme according to their interests. This process of semantic mutation, therefore, involves a shift in the axes of meaning within narrative structures, determining which versions of the meme gain legitimacy and which are progressively displaced to the discursive periphery.

c. **Use of symbols and metaphors:** Lastly, the use of symbols and metaphors is a fundamental mechanism in the transformation and consolidation of cognosystemic memes, as it enables their internalization, replication, and adaptability within the Cognosystem. The effectiveness of a meme is closely tied to its capacity to condense and synthesize complex meaning structures into symbolic images and metaphorical constructions that resonate with the cognitive frameworks of the recipient. Through this process, memes can embed abstract concepts into socially shared narratives, facilitating their incorporation into the symbolic regulation of reality.

   The impact of symbols and metaphors on the dynamics of the cognosystemic meme lies in their discursive malleability and their ability to generate differentiated pragmatic effects depending on the context in which they are mobilized. A clear example is the metaphor of the "social elevator," used to represent economic mobility and opportunities for individual advancement. In contexts where a meritocratic conception of development prevails, this metaphor reinforces the idea that individual effort is the main determinant of success. However, in societies marked by high levels of structural inequality, the same symbol can be re-signified to highlight the absence of equitable access to opportunities, becoming a critical discursive resource against hegemonic narratives of social mobility.

   Another emblematic example is the metaphor of the "wall," whose polysemy allows it to be instrumentalized in opposing ideological discourses. In certain political narratives, the wall represents protection, sovereignty, and self-determination in the face of external threats, while in other discursive configurations, it symbolizes exclusion, isolation, and the restriction of freedoms. The ability of cognosystemic memes to articulate around highly evocative symbols not only facilitates their insertion into preexisting narratives, but also strengthens their influence on the structure of collective meaning.

   Moreover, the use of symbols and metaphors enables the transmission of cognosystemic memes across different levels of the Cognosystem, ensuring their adaptability and reproduction in changing contexts. The re-signification of these symbolic elements over time demonstrates the meme's capacity to reorganize and reconfigure dominant narratives, ultimately consolidating itself as an interpretive framework that structures the perception of social reality.

Ultimately, the cognosystemic meme functions not only as a channel for narrative transmission but also as an active device of discursive transformation within the Cognosystem. Through mechanisms such as cultural contextualization, semantic mutation, and the incorporation of symbols and metaphors, these memes reconfigure narrative struc-

tures, adapting to new interpretive frameworks and ensuring their influence in the symbolic construction of human intersubjective reality.

Interaction of the cognosystemic meme with the narrative hierarchy

The cognosystemic meme interacts dialectically with the hierarchy of narratives that shape collective thought and define the interpretive frameworks through which societies understand their reality. This interaction is neither homogeneous nor mechanical, but rather a complex process in which memes can fulfill different functions depending on their degree of penetration across various narrative levels. In other words, a meme's capacity for dissemination and adaptability enables it to function as a catalyst for the rise of new narratives, as a mechanism for consolidating hegemonic discourses, or alternatively, as an agent of erosion for discursive structures that have lost relevance within the Cognosystem.

The position a cognosystemic meme occupies within this hierarchy is not arbitrary; it responds to a set of interdependent factors such as its intentional design, its capacity for replication, and its compatibility with dominant narratives in a given sociohistorical context. Moreover, its level of influence is conditioned by the systemic layer in which it is embedded: at the microsystem level, it may manifest in interpersonal discourse and everyday practices; at the mesosystem level, it may be articulated within organizations and intermediary communities that amplify its reach; at the exosystem level, it may influence political and economic structures that regulate its dissemination; and at the macrosystem level, it may become consolidated as a structuring axis of the dominant ideology.

This multidimensional interaction highlights the importance of analyzing the dynamics of cognosystemic memes not as static units of information, but as narrative systems in constant adaptation, actively participating in the configuration and reconfiguration of collective meaning.

Narrative ascension through memes

The ascension of narratives within the hierarchy of the Cognosystem is determined by the capacity of cognosystemic memes to act as catalysts for discursive repositioning, facilitating the amplification of emerging narratives and their consolidation at higher levels of influence. This process is not merely spontaneous but results from a combination of structural factors and influencing agents who design and disseminate the meme in order to maximize its adaptability and replication. When a cognosystemic meme successfully embeds itself within the narrative networks of the Cognosystem, its underlying narrative gains traction and progressively shifts from marginal discursive spaces to structures of greater centrality and symbolic impact.

This narrative ascension is mediated by the way the cognosystemic meme interacts with the conditions of the sociopolitical context, the predisposition of the discursive environment to receive the message, and the ability of narrative agents to articulate the meme

with other preexisting narrative systems. This process can be observed in recent phenomena where initially peripheral narratives—such as the concept of "collaborative economy"—have managed to gain legitimacy and centrality through the introduction of memes specifically designed to influence public perception and regulatory structures.

In this sense, the ascension of narratives through cognosystemic memes represents a key mechanism of symbolic transformation within the Cognosystem, as it redefines the criteria for discursive legitimization and establishes new logics of social influence through the intentional configuration of interpretive frameworks.

For example, a narrative that was once limited to the microsystem—such as the promotion of remote work prior to the pandemic—manages to expand through memes designed to influence public opinion and organizational decision-making. In an initial stage, a viral slogan circulated on social media introduces the idea into public debate, triggering a perceptual shift among individuals and communities. Subsequently, at the mesosystem level, educational institutions and companies adopt and adapt this narrative to their internal structures, consolidating the concept as a viable practice. In the exosystem, social and economic pressure drives the creation of regulatory frameworks that formalize and legitimize remote work as a sustainable option. Finally, at the macrosystem level, remote work becomes institutionalized as part of the global socioeconomic model, illustrating how a meme can catalyze the ascension of a narrative until it becomes a dominant paradigm.

Consolidation of hegemonic narratives

Cognosystemic memes play a fundamental role in the consolidation of hegemonic narratives, functioning as discursive reinforcement devices that ensure the persistence and legitimization of certain interpretive frameworks within the Cognosystem. Their function lies not only in the repetition and dissemination of a dominant narrative, but also in the sophisticated articulation of its elements to strengthen its internal cohesion and its resilience against alternative discourses.

This phenomenon becomes evident when a meme—designed with a highly replicable structure and compatible with the normative frameworks of the Cognosystem—is instrumentalized to embed a preexisting narrative across various levels of influence. Its effectiveness lies in its ability to naturalize certain narratives, turning them into unquestioned reference points within the symbolic organization of social reality. Moreover, cognosystemic memes that reinforce hegemonic narratives often incorporate mechanisms of discursive self-regulation, ensuring that their content adapts to contextual changes without losing their central position within the narrative hierarchy.

In this sense, the consolidation of a narrative through memes is not a linear process, but a strategic operation that responds to power dynamics, institutional validation processes, and cultural acceptability structures that determine its longevity over time.

A paradigmatic case of narrative consolidation through cognosystemic memes can be seen in the exaltation of "technological progress" as a structural axis of development. The idea that technological innovation is an inevitable driver of social advancement is reinforced through multiple narrative channels: advertising campaigns, corporate slogans,

and governmental discourses that present digitalization as synonymous with prosperity. At the microsystem level, this narrative is perpetuated through formal education and the everyday use of technology. In the mesosystem, corporate and academic policies prioritize digitalization as a key factor in professional and productive success. At the exosystem level, regulations and legal frameworks favor investment in technological infrastructure. Finally, at the macrosystem level, international organizations and global markets consolidate the technological narrative as a pillar of the socioeconomic order, ensuring its discursive hegemony.

Erosion of narratives through memes

Just as cognosystemic memes can facilitate the ascension and consolidation of narratives within the Cognosystem, they also play a crucial role in the erosion of previously hegemonic discourses. This process does not occur randomly, but rather results from the strategic introduction of cognosystemic memes that challenge, reformulate, or undermine the discursive pillars supporting a dominant narrative. The erosion of a narrative takes place when it loses its capacity for legitimization within the social context and is progressively displaced by emerging narrative structures with greater resonance and adaptability.

From a systemic perspective, this phenomenon reflects a rebalancing within the Cognosystem, in which the progressive fragmentation of an established narrative occurs through the insertion of memes that challenge its internal coherence and its compatibility with prevailing interpretive frameworks. This process can be gradual, when cognosystemic memes slowly erode a narrative over time, or abrupt, when a disruptive event accelerates its discursive collapse. In both cases, the proliferation of memes that expose contradictions, weaken symbolic acceptability, or delegitimize the argumentative foundations of an established narrative is decisive for its decline.

The erosion of a narrative may also be accompanied by a process of re-signification, in which elements of the weakened narrative are reappropriated by emerging discourses, allowing for the integration of new symbolic frameworks that reconfigure the Cognosystem. In this sense, the disappearance of a dominant narrative does not necessarily imply its absolute eradication, but rather its transmutation into new discursive structures that reorganize the symbolic space according to the logics of power, influence, and cultural acceptability.

An example of this process can be seen in the transformation of the narrative surrounding fossil fuel consumption. For decades, the use of oil was associated with economic growth and energy stability. However, the dissemination of memes emphasizing the climate crisis and the urgency of sustainable energy transitions has accelerated the delegitimization of this narrative. At the microsystem level, environmental concerns are internalized through individual practices such as responsible consumption and the adoption of clean technologies. In the mesosystem, universities and companies promote the transition to renewable energy, redefining the economic discourse on sustainable development. Within the exosystem, government regulations impose restrictions on fossil fuel use and incentivize the shift toward alternative energies. Finally, at the macrosystem level, the "green economy" becomes consolidated as a structural paradigm, replacing the previous

narrative of dependence on oil.

General conclusions on the cognosystemic meme

The TCCR has developed the concept of the "cognosystemic meme" as a strategically oriented unit of meaning endowed with a structuring capacity within the dynamics of the narrative systems that constitute the Cognosystem. Unlike the classical theoretical conceptualization of the "meme" as a replicative entity of cultural information, the "cognosystemic meme" is distinguished by its structural intentionality, functioning not only as a transmitter of meaning but also as a vector for semantic and discursive reconfiguration across the different ecosystemic levels. Its operability enables the consolidation, friction, or transition of narrative systems, ensuring the persistence and transformation of the symbolic framework that shapes psychosocial reality. Moreover, its capacity to operate across diverse ecosystemic contexts reinforces its functionality as a tool for modulating collective thought, allowing discursive structures to adapt in response to the demands of the environment.

From this perspective, the TCCR posits the cognosystemic meme as a significant agent of structural influence within the narrative hierarchy, functioning as a strategic mechanism for the validation, reformulation, or displacement of discourses within the intersubjective architecture of meanings that composes the Cognosystem. Its capacity for mutability, hybridization, competitiveness, and absorption makes it a highly plastic narrative device, capable of adapting to sociocultural transformations without losing its strategic functionality. It is not limited to serving as a channel for the transfer of meanings, but rather constitutes an instrument for the reconfiguration of epistemic frameworks, enabling the re-signification of interpretive structures and the emergence of new paradigms of meaning-making. In this regard, the cognosystemic meme is distinguished by its active interaction with preexisting narrative structures, facilitating processes of semantic adaptation that ensure its persistence and evolution within the Cognosystem.

The analysis of the cognosystemic meme also clarifies the processes of design, reproduction, and mutation of narratives within the systemic ecology of the Cognosystem—from micro-level dimensions to macronarrative structures. Its potential influence on the configuration of collective perception and the operability of power structures highlights its role not merely as a vector of semantic transmissibility, but as a catalyst for transformations in the organization of social meaning. Its impact is evident in its ability to alter traditional discursive constructs, reformulate mechanisms of narrative influence, and generate turning points in the interpretation of collective reality. This positions it as a central tool in the study of discursive evolution and symbolic influence practices across diverse sociocultural contexts.

Consequently, the integration of this perspective into the TCCR provides a theoretical and methodological framework that enables the design of multilevel narrative interventions with a high degree of structural impact, facilitating the analysis and modification of meaning systems that regulate intersubjective experience and the psychosocial configuration of reality. In this way, the study of the cognosystemic meme not only expands the

analytical scope of the TCCR but also offers a solid conceptual foundation for understanding phenomena of narrative transmissibility and their influence on the organization of the symbolic structure that governs human experience.

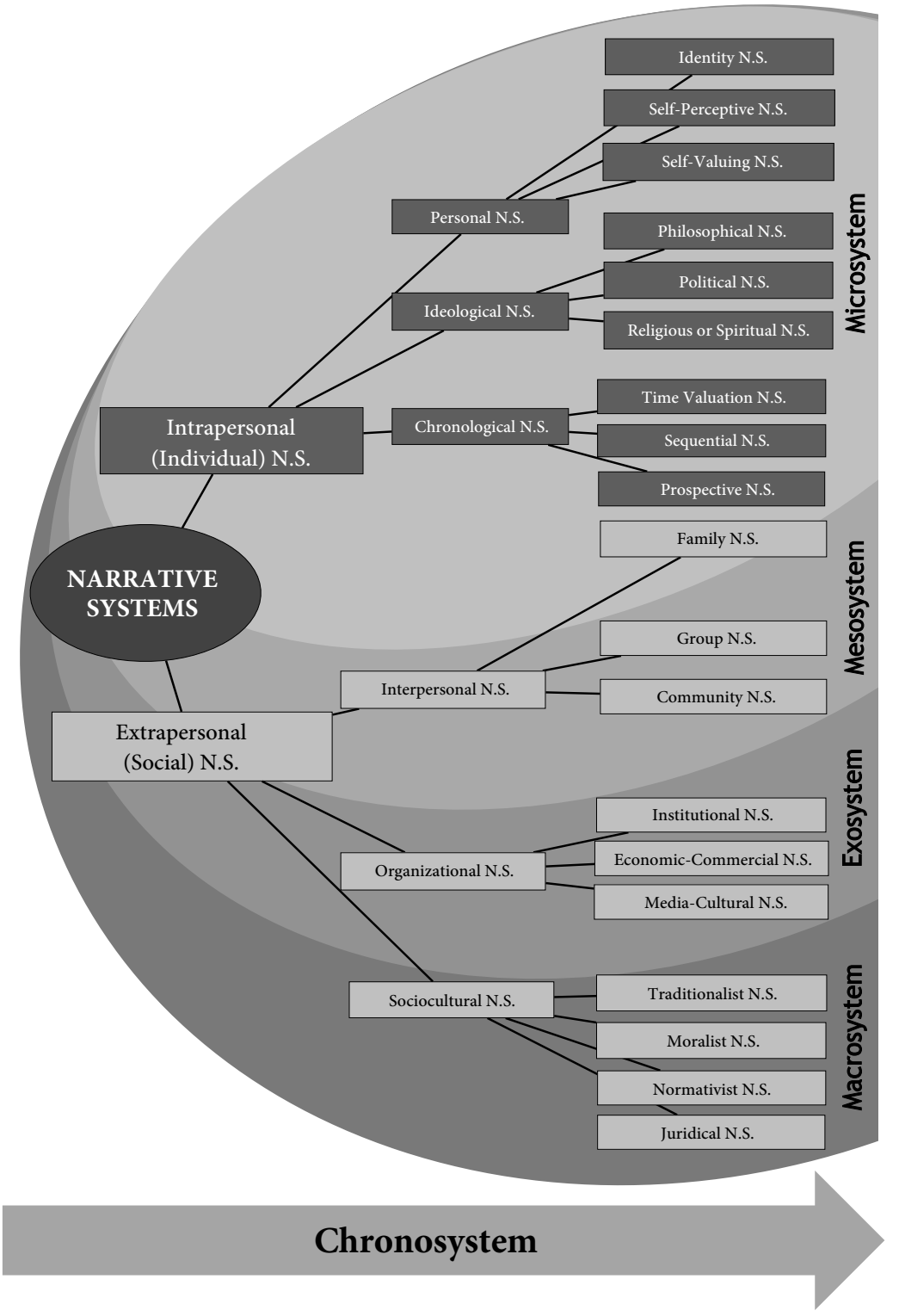
9. BASIC CLASSIFICATION OF TYPES OF NARRATIVE SYSTEMS

IN THE CONTEXT of all that has been previously discussed regarding the TCCR, it is considered an important task to offer a proposed classification of narrative systems within the Cognosystem. This endeavor is viewed as potentially central to understanding the structural and functional configurations of human narratives in the construction of social meaning—not as an exhaustive or definitive taxonomy, but rather as an open framework that acknowledges the complexity of this investigative challenge and invites future academic development.

In this regard, as previously discussed, the Cognosystem—according to this theoretical proposal—is understood as a complex network of narrative systems, highly interconnected and dynamic in nature, operating across multiple levels of complexity. It modulates the structuring of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and human collectivity in general through the constant negotiation of perceptions and meanings.

The classification of narrative systems within the Cognosystem not only provides an advanced heuristic for analyzing the operability of narratives in the configuration of psychosocial reality, but also enables their modeling and strategic manipulation for the purpose of generating structural transformations. In this sense, its study becomes a cornerstone in the design of both research methodologies and professional interventions, capable of influencing individual meaning systems as well as macrostructural narrative configurations, with the aim of fostering more adaptive, resilient, and functional psychosocial dynamics.

Ecosystemic framework for the proposed classification of Narrative Systems (N.S.) in the Cognosystem



Intrapersonal (individual) Narrative Systems

Personal narrative systems

Personal narrative systems constitute the foundational architecture in the construction of the "self" and the "I" within the Cognosystem, functioning as the central structure through which individuals interpret, consolidate, and reconfigure their identity over time. From the perspective of the TCCR, these narrative systems do not operate in isolation; rather, they exist in a constant process of interdependence and feedback with other narrative levels, shaped both by subjective experience and the sociocultural conditions of the surrounding environment. The dynamic nature of these systems enables them to absorb, transform, and re-signify narrative elements in response to contextual changes, thus ensuring intrapersonal continuity and plasticity.

These systems can be classified into three interdependent dimensions: *identity narrative systems*, which function as the structural core of self-image and the coherence of the "I"; *self-perceptive narrative systems*, which regulate how the individual observes themselves in different life scenarios; and *self-valuing narrative systems*, which directly influence self-esteem and self-efficacy, determining the degree of confidence and subjective validation the individual attributes to themselves. The intersection of these systems enables not only self-understanding and personal stability, but also the individual's capacity to adapt to external or internal transformations.

- **Identity narrative systems:**

  Identity narrative systems constitute the central axis of the self, providing an interpretive structure that allows the individual to integrate experiences, beliefs, and values into a coherent narrative that gives meaning to their existence. From a cognosystemic perspective, narrative identity is configured as a constantly evolving framework, characterized by its ability to absorb and reorganize meanings in response to experiential changes and the social context in which it is embedded.

  For example, an individual who grows up in a rural environment and later migrates to a metropolitan area experiences a narrative transition that does not entail a total replacement of their identity, but rather a reconfiguration of it. The incorporation of new urban practices and values does not eradicate their rural roots; instead, it integrates them into a broader and more complex narrative structure. Similarly, a professional who, after decades in a particular field, is forced to shift to a different sector undergoes an identity recomposition in which their sense of competence and purpose must be reinterpreted and adapted to the new demands of the environment.

- **Self-perceptive narrative systems:**

Self-perception constitutes a fundamental dimension within the individual's narrative structure, functioning as a mechanism of symbolic regulation through which a person evaluates themselves in relation to their context. From the perspective of the TCCR, this system is not a static reflection of self-image, but a discursive construction in constant negotiation, influenced both by social feedback and by accumulated subjective experiences.

A paradigmatic case is that of an academic in the early stages of their professional career, who may experience a sense of insecurity regarding their ability to make a meaningful contribution to their discipline. However, as they receive external validation through publications, collaborations, and peer recognition, their self-perceptive narrative is reconfigured, consolidating a self-image as a respected figure within their field. In another scenario, an athlete who suffers a severe injury may experience a rupture in their perception of strength and capability. Nonetheless, if they succeed in re-signifying the experience in terms of resilience and learning, they may reconstruct their self-perceptive narrative in a way that allows them to continue growing—albeit under a new athletic or professional identity.

- **Self-valuing narrative systems:**

The self-valuing narrative system plays a decisive role in shaping an individual's self-esteem and self-efficacy. The way a person evaluates their own performance and capabilities is directly influenced by the narrative they construct around their achievements, failures, and the social validation they receive. From a cognosystemic perspective, this system not only regulates the perception of self-worth but also influences the individual's predisposition toward action and their resilience in the face of adversity.

For example, an entrepreneur who faces repeated business failures may interpret these experiences in two diametrically opposed ways. If their self-valuing narrative system frames failure as evidence of personal inadequacy, their self-esteem and self-efficacy will be eroded, leading to greater resistance to initiating new projects. However, if their narrative integrates failure as an essential component of learning and entrepreneurial growth, these same adverse events can strengthen their confidence and motivation to try again—this time from a perspective of resilience and continuous improvement.

Another illustrative example can be found in the academic setting: a student who receives harsh criticism regarding their performance may experience a decline in self-worth if they internalize such feedback as proof of incompetence. However, if the same evaluations are reinterpreted within a narrative of growth and self-improvement, the student can reformulate their perception of failure as an opportunity for development, thereby strengthening their willingness to face academic challenges in a constructive manner.

Ideological narrative systems

Ideological narrative systems constitute another structuring axis in the configuration of individual worldview, shaping the epistemological and axiological frameworks through which subjects interpret reality and position their agency within the sociocultural fabric. These systems operate as discursive structures in constant reconfiguration, adapting to interactions with new experiences, hegemonic discourses, and processes of socialization. From a cognosystemic perspective, their nature is intrinsically dynamic, allowing for the modulation of their contents in response to contextual changes and disruptive experiences.

- **Philosophical narrative systems:**

  Philosophical narratives constitute the conceptual scaffolding that enables individuals to structure their understanding of ontology, epistemology, and ethics. Far from being static, these narratives evolve in response to exposure to divergent systems of thought, the development of critical thinking, and the reformulation of knowledge in contexts of uncertainty. The flexibility of these narrative systems allows for the adaptation and synthesis of seemingly opposing perspectives, facilitating a progressive refinement of one's personal interpretive framework.

  For example, an academic who in their youth subscribed to a dogmatic rationalism based on the primacy of reason and empirical evidence may, over time and through the incorporation of significant subjective experiences, develop a more integrative philosophical outlook that values intersubjectivity and phenomenological experience. This narrative transformation not only reflects a cognitive adjustment but also an expansion of the semantic field from which the individual constructs meaning.

- **Political narrative systems:**

  Political narratives operate as semiotic constructs that shape the interpretation of power, justice, and social organization. These narratives are generated within the framework of political socialization processes and are influenced by interaction with ideological discourses, the lived experience of sociopolitical phenomena, and exposure to mechanisms of persuasive communication. From a cognosystemic perspective, their nature is inherently dialogical, allowing for the coexistence of conflicting elements that can be reformulated through interaction with ideologically diverse environments.

  A paradigmatic case is that of an individual raised in an environment with deeply conservative values, where dominant political narratives reinforce institutional stability and the primacy of tradition. If that individual later enters a context in which public policies favor more progressive models and witnesses structural transformations in the social and economic spheres, their political narrative system may be reconfigured. The cognitive dissonance between their original narrative and the newly observed reality creates a space for reformulation, in which meanings are negotiated and their ideological positioning is modulated.

- **Religious or spiritual narrative systems:**

Religious and spiritual narratives constitute fundamental interpretive frameworks in the construction of meaning around transcendence, morality, and the relationship with the sacred. From the cognosystemic perspective, these systems cannot be conceived as immutable structures but rather as symbolic constructions in constant transformation, influenced by experiences of crisis, interactions with alternative belief systems, and the need to reconcile experiential reality with doctrinal principles.

For example, an individual raised within a religious tradition with rigid dogmas may experience a crisis of faith when faced with a traumatic event that challenges their understanding of suffering and divine justice. In this context, their religious narrative system may be reconfigured, shifting from a strictly dogmatic interpretation toward a more flexible and experiential view of spirituality. This transition does not necessarily imply the abandonment of faith, but rather the resignification of values and principles through a narrative that allows them to integrate their experience into a broader framework of meaning.

Similarly, an individual raised in a secular environment may develop a spiritual narrative in response to experiences that transcend their prior rationalist framework. Immersion in communities with a strong sense of transcendence or exposure to ritual practices can lead to a transformation in their perception of the sacred, incorporating narrative elements that re-signify their worldview and reconfigure their relationship with spirituality.

Chronological narrative systems

Chronological narrative systems represent a special—often overlooked—component in the configuration of human experience, providing an organizing framework that enables the integration of events and the construction of temporal coherence within the Cognosystem. In the context of the TCCR, these systems do not merely play a passive role in the interpretation of the past, the structuring of the present, and the projection of the future; they also function as active mechanisms of identity regulation and contextual adaptation. The relationship with time, far from being a universally homogeneous phenomenon, is deeply influenced by sociocultural, psychological, and experiential factors that lend specificity to temporal narratives in each individual and collective.

- **Time valuation narrative systems:**

Time is a narrative construction whose valuation varies substantially depending on the cultural, economic, and psychological frameworks that shape it. From a cognosystemic perspective, the valuation of time is not merely a reflection of individual conditions but emerges from the interaction of multiple narrative systems that influence its perception and the prioritization of actions.

For example, a businessperson operating in a highly competitive market may construct a narrative in which time is viewed as a scarce resource, structuring their daily life around the maximization of efficiency and profitability. From this perspective, each unit of time becomes a strategic input whose optimization is essential for success. In contrast, a farmer who organizes their work according to the natural cycles of the environment may construct a temporal narrative based on patience and adaptation to seasonal rhythms, prioritizing stability over urgency. These examples illustrate how time valuation narrative systems not only influence the structuring of everyday life but also shape how individuals make decisions and construct their sense of stability and purpose.

At the generational level, these differences can become even more pronounced. A retired individual who has completed their working stage may reconstruct their temporal narrative from an experiential perspective, prioritizing activities that provide satisfaction and personal meaning. In contrast, a young person in the early stages of their professional development may interpret time as a source of pressure and urgency, where each decision carries significant weight for their future. These contrasts highlight the plasticity of time valuation narrative systems and their relevance in shaping one's sense of life meaning.

- **Sequential narrative systems:**

Sequential narratives operate as organizing structures that provide logic and continuity to human experience. Sequentiality is an essential cognosystemic principle, as it facilitates the generation of narrative coherence over time and enables the construction of meaning based on causality and the progression of events.

For example, an individual who has experienced multiple professional failures may reorganize their sequential narrative to identify patterns of learning, understanding that each setback constituted an essential phase of growth leading to eventual success. In this sense, success is no longer conceived as an isolated event but rather understood as a progressive construction based on the accumulation of learning and the overcoming of challenges. This capacity for narrative restructuring is crucial for resilience and psychological stability.

Another illustrative case is that of a person who has experienced multiple unsuccessful romantic relationships. If their sequential narrative is organized in terms of cumulative failure, it is likely to generate a sense of frustration and hopelessness. However, if they reconfigure their narrative to interpret each experience as part of an emotional development process, they can foster a more functional and adaptive perception of their personal history—allowing the past to become a resource for building more fulfilling future relationships.

From the perspective of the TCCR, the sequential structuring of experience fulfills a fundamental role in cognitive and emotional regulation, as it enables the integration of experiences within a comprehensible and predictable framework. This, in turn, minimizes uncertainty and optimizes decision-making based on accumulated learning.

- **Prospective narrative systems:**

Prospective narratives shape the anticipation of future scenarios and enable the formulation of action strategies aimed at achieving individual and collective goals. Within the framework of the TCCR, narrative projection is not merely a speculative exercise but an active process of reality construction, in which expectations, plans, and personal goals determine present behavior and structure the cognitive and social environment.

For example, a university student who envisions their future in a specific professional field will organize their current decisions and efforts according to that projection, establishing milestones and adjusting their behavior to align with their goal. Their prospective narrative functions not only as a reference framework for decision-making but also regulates their motivation and sense of purpose. However, if during their academic journey the job market in their chosen field undergoes a structural transformation, their ability to reconfigure their prospective narrative will be crucial to their level of adaptability and success in redefining their path.

Similarly, an entrepreneur launching an innovative project in an emerging sector builds their prospective narrative based on the viability of their business and the evolution of the market. The ability to adjust that narrative in response to economic, technological, or regulatory changes will be key to their success or failure. In this sense, the flexibility of the prospective narrative is an essential factor for resilience, as it allows for the integration of new variables without compromising psychological stability or the individual's personal identity.

Extrapersonal (social) Narrative Systems

Interpersonal narrative systems

Interpersonal narrative systems constitute a fundamental structural dimension within the Cognosystem, as they enable the generation, transmission, and evolution of shared meanings across different levels of social interaction. From a cognosystemic perspective, these systems not only facilitate the construction of intersubjective realities but also serve a regulatory function in the structuring of social norms, group cohesion, and the consolidation of collective identities. They are plastic systems, in constant reformulation, which allows them to adapt to the evolution of shared experiences, contextual changes, and the incorporation of new narrative elements in response to sociocultural transformations.

These narrative systems function as structuring devices for relational identity by defining interpretive frameworks that mediate interactions among individuals within a group. Additionally, they possess an integrative capacity that enables the articulation between the individual and the collective, providing coherence to shared narratives based on the history, traditions, and values that shape social reality.

An essential aspect of interpersonal narrative systems is their ability to generate stability within a group by providing a semiotic structure that regulates the sense of belonging and enables conflict resolution through the re-signification of experiences. However, their stability does not imply rigidity, as they are adaptive structures that evolve in response to social interaction processes, facilitating the continuity of collective identity in changing contexts.

- **Family narrative systems:**

  Family narrative systems operate as primary interpretive frameworks in the formation of the individual, shaping meaning structures that influence the perception of reality and identity through the articulation of intergenerational values, norms, and practices. These systems not only serve an identity function within the family group but also facilitate adaptation to historical, economic, and cultural changes that affect the relational dynamics among its members, enabling the transmission and reconfiguration of narrative patterns that ensure the continuity of the family system in changing contexts.

  The plasticity of these systems is evident in their ability to reorganize narrative frameworks in response to situations that challenge the stability of the group. For example, in a family unit where self-sufficiency and individual effort have traditionally been valued, the dominant narrative may revolve around meritocracy as a guiding principle. However, if that family experiences an economic crisis that strains its self-sufficiency model, the family narrative may be reformulated to incorporate principles of cooperation and solidarity, reflecting an adjustment of the narrative system in response to new emerging needs. This process of re-signification not only enables the functional adaptation of the group but also restructures collective identity based on values redefined through interaction with the context.

  Likewise, in families whose structure is based on a narrative of intergenerational unity, a phenomenon such as the migration of one of its members may trigger processes of narrative reformulation. Physical distance and the diversification of individual experiences can cause disruptions in the family narrative system, prompting the construction of narratives that transcend physical proximity and reinforce the continuity of the sense of belonging. In such cases, narrative strategies may include the consolidation of symbolic rituals, the use of communication technologies, and the redefinition of roles within the family structure, allowing for the preservation of cohesion despite geographical fragmentation.

  From a cognosystemic perspective, family narrative systems not only organize meaning structures at the individual and relational levels, but also function as regulators of intergenerational interaction. Their capacity to integrate new experiences without losing structural coherence is key to ensuring the continuity of family identity, making sure that the narratives transmitted remain functional and relevant within the context of a constantly changing society.

- **Group narrative systems:**

Group narratives emerge as dynamic systems that structure and organize the collective identity of individuals who share common experiences, values, or purposes. From the perspective of the TCCR, these narrative systems not only regulate cohesion and the sense of belonging within groups but also serve as interpretive frameworks that shape how meanings are negotiated and interactions among members are managed. Their flexibility is a key element of their functionality, as it allows for the absorption of new dynamics and the reformulation of narrative structures in response to contextual changes.

Group narrative systems operate across multiple levels, from the workplace to community spaces, and their stability depends on their ability to integrate new experiences without losing internal coherence. In an organizational context, for example, a work team whose narrative is centered on innovation and efficiency will see its group identity reinforced insofar as its members adopt these values as guiding principles of their performance. The stability of this narrative will depend on its ability to adapt to changing scenarios. If the organization undergoes a crisis that requires internal restructuring, the group narrative may be reformulated to include elements of resilience, allowing members to reconfigure themselves without fragmenting the collective identity.

In collectives with an activist or ideological orientation, the group narrative is often articulated around the defense of a cause or the pursuit of social transformation. In these cases, the sustainability of the narrative system lies in its ability to evolve without losing its structuring core. If sociopolitical conditions change and the original cause becomes less relevant or faces new challenges, the group must reformulate its narrative to remain functional within the sociocultural ecosystem. Rigidity in such systems can lead to their disintegration, whereas narrative flexibility allows for the diversification of strategies and the incorporation of new approaches without compromising internal cohesion.

In cognosystemic terms, group narratives function as feedback systems in which individual and collective discourses mutually influence each other in a continuous process of negotiation and re-signification. Their capacity for transformation is essential to ensure longevity and relevance, allowing groups to adapt to changes in their environments without losing their sense of identity or functional structure.

- **Community narrative systems:**

Community narratives constitute fundamental symbolic structures that shape the collective identity of a community, facilitating the intergenerational transmission of values, practices, and norms that ensure the continuity and stability of the social fabric. These narrative systems function as regulatory mechanisms that not only preserve historical memory but also structure socialization processes and define the symbolic boundaries between those who belong to the community and those outside of it.

From a cognosystemic perspective, community narratives play an essential role in integrating individual experiences within a collective framework, enabling the construction of a shared sense of belonging and purpose. However, their stability does not imply immutability, as these systems are highly adaptive and respond dynamically to structural transformations, crises, and disruptive events that may alter their original configuration.

For example, in a rural community whose identity has been built around agriculture and life in harmony with the natural environment, the onset of industrialization may trigger a crisis in its collective narrative. If this change is not adequately integrated into the community's narrative structure, it can lead to the fragmentation of the social fabric, intergenerational tensions, and the loss of core elements of community identity. To prevent this narrative collapse, the community may reconfigure its collective story, integrating elements of modernization without disconnecting from its historical identity. This process of narrative re-signification allows the community to move toward a balanced model of development in which tradition and innovation coexist functionally.

Another illustrative case of narrative transformation occurs in communities that have experienced natural disasters. In such contexts, the community narrative may be reconfigured to emphasize resilience and reconstruction, fostering a sense of unity and solidarity that supports both material and psychological recovery. The way a community constructs its collective narrative after a catastrophe not only influences how its members cope with trauma but also determines its capacity for reorganization and adaptation in the face of future adversity. In this sense, building a discourse grounded in overcoming and learning can strengthen social cohesion and generate more robust support structures in the long term.

From a cognosystemic approach, community narratives operate in a dynamic balance between stability and transformation. While their primary function is to provide continuity to collective identity, their adaptive capacity is crucial to ensuring the group's survival in changing contexts. As long as communities are able to reformulate their narratives without losing the structural pillars of their identity, they will be able to maintain internal cohesion and project themselves into the future without abandoning their historical legacy.

Organizational narrative systems

From the perspective of the TCCR, organizational narrative systems represent a manifestation of the exosystem in Bronfenbrenner's terms, reformulated through a lens that emphasizes their discursive dimension and structural role in shaping psychosocial experience. They are not merely conceived as an external level of influence but as a semiotic macrostructure that regulates interactions between microsystemic and intersystemic levels, articulating interpretive frameworks that define, constrain, and reproduce social praxis without requiring the conscious participation of individuals in their construction.

These organizational narrative systems are not merely platforms of mediation but symbolic architectures that shape access to resources, the legitimacy of power structures,

and the axiological orientation of decision-making within the framework of collective life. Through them, institutions, cultural norms, institutionalized discourses, and organizational policies establish narrative frameworks that not only reflect social reality but also produce it, defining the forms of subjectivation and structuring social action.

In the educational sphere, for example, schools do not merely transmit explicit knowledge—they also convey and reinforce narratives that define success, failure, social mobility, and sociocultural roles. A student, even without having participated in the formulation of the institution's narrative, is conditioned by it, internalizing its values and expectations through the curriculum structure, assessment mechanisms, and normative regulations that govern performance. The narrative of "academic merit" functions not only as a criterion for evaluation but also as a cognitive lens that structures the perception of the future and the possibilities for personal fulfillment within the social system.

Similarly, large media corporations do not merely reproduce information—they play a fundamental role in constructing the social imaginary. Through their institutional narratives, they shape the interpretive frameworks of political, economic, and cultural reality without requiring direct interaction between the discourse producers and the receiving public. A citizen who consumes news content, for instance, does not participate in the construction of that narrative, yet is shaped by it in their understanding of sociopolitical phenomena. The selection of agenda topics, the repetition of certain perspectives, and the omission of others consolidate interpretive matrices that regulate how society perceives conflicts, crises, and structural transformations.

These organizational narrative systems, operating within the exosystem, take on a dual function: on the one hand, they stabilize the frameworks of intelligibility that enable social systems to remain cohesive; on the other, they establish cognitive boundaries that shape perception and constrain action within those systems. From the perspective of the TCCR, the exploration of these systems is essential to understanding how discursive macrostructures shape subjectivity and regulate the configuration of psychosocial experience in contemporary society.

- **Institutional narrative systems:**

  Institutional narrative systems constitute the discursive infrastructure that underpins the functionality of organizations responsible for ensuring stability, normativity, and continuity within social systems. These narratives operate through symbolic regulatory mechanisms, shaping the semiotic structure that defines the interaction between individuals and institutions. They are expressed through the discourse of governmental, religious, educational, and other authoritative entities whose function is to establish the normative frameworks that guide collective behavior and the reproduction of social order.

  These narrative systems not only structure the administrative operations of institutions, but also establish interpretive frameworks that shape how individuals internalize their roles within the sociopolitical and cultural fabric. In the field of public health, for example, health policies go beyond the mere formulation of regulations—they produce narratives about self-care, individual responsibility for health, and the perception of epidemiological risk. A citizen does not need to actively participate in the construction of these narratives to be shaped by them; their

access to healthcare services, response to prevention campaigns, and perception of well-being are all structured by the meanings these policies project into the social sphere.

Likewise, in the religious context, ecclesiastical institutions articulate organizational narratives that not only establish models of morality but also define categories of identity and belonging. These narratives are embedded within discursive traditions that predate individuals and shape their experience within a symbolic framework that structures their relationship with the transcendent, the community of believers, and the normative values of doctrine. The construction of faith, the interpretation of dogma, and the internalization of ritual practices respond to a narrative ecology that functions as a regulatory exosystem of spiritual and sociocultural experience, determining adherence to ethical principles, the legitimacy of certain behaviors, and the perception of life's meaning within an established organizational framework.

These narrative systems, operating at the exosystemic level, generate a structural conditioning that functions without requiring the direct involvement of individuals in their formulation. They therefore constitute a form of semiotic mediation that shapes the conditions of possibility for social praxis, establishing the parameters through which organizational actors and citizens interpret their reality and their relationship with the institutions that structure the collective order.

- **Economic-commercial narrative systems:**

Economic-commercial narrative systems function as discursive structures that regulate productive dynamics, access to resources, and interactions among consumers, workers, and institutional actors. These narrative systems not only establish meanings that shape the perception of economic stability, progress, and competitiveness, but also structure the way individuals internalize their position within the economic field, conditioning their expectations of development and social mobility.

The market, far from being a neutral space for exchange, is embedded in a discursive framework that legitimizes certain values and organizational principles, naturalizing models of production and consumption that are the result of historical and structural processes. Contemporary economic narratives, for instance, have consolidated the paradigm of unlimited growth and efficiency as fundamental objectives of any productive system, without questioning the material conditions or the externalities resulting from this model. In this way, individuals—despite not participating in the formulation of these narratives—find themselves immersed in an interpretive framework that defines their possibilities for action and the alternatives they perceive as viable within the economic system.

A prominent example is the discourse of technology companies, which have articulated a narrative in which innovation is associated with social progress and collective well-being. This narrative shapes not only consumers' expectations about technological advancement but also their perception of obsolescence and the need for constant upgrading. Thus, the individual is not merely a passive recipient of new technologies but internalizes a logic of consumption tied to the pace of

change and the continuous optimization of performance. The idea that digital advancement is both inevitable and desirable does not emerge from autonomous deliberation, but rather is embedded within a narrative ecosystem that shapes the relationship between technology, the market, and modernity.

Likewise, the meritocratic narrative within the business sphere shapes how individuals understand their development potential within the labor market. This narrative, which emphasizes individual effort as the primary determinant of success, obscures the structural conditions that shape career trajectories and actual opportunities for economic advancement. Although most employees and entrepreneurs do not participate in the construction of these narratives, they internalize them as organizing principles for their performance and expectations within the productive system. Operating at the exosystemic level, this narrative system influences how individuals assess their achievements and failures, generating an interpretive framework in which structural inequalities are relegated to the domain of individual responsibility.

These narrative systems, by embedding themselves within the cognitive exosystem, fulfill a dual function: on the one hand, they stabilize the discursive architecture of the economic order by generating a sense of continuity and predictability within the system; on the other hand, they delimit the boundaries of what is possible, shaping individuals' expectations and their capacity for agency within the market. Understanding these processes through the lens of the TCCR reveals the underlying logic of dominant economic narratives and highlights how they shape modes of social relations in contemporary society.

- **Media-cultural narrative systems:**

Media-cultural narrative systems constitute a discursive exosystem in which collective representations are not only shaped by the organizations that produce and distribute symbolic content, but also operate as cognitive matrices that structure the perception of social reality. These narrative systems have the capacity to generate meanings that go beyond the realm of communication, influencing the interpretive frameworks through which individuals and groups understand the world and their own identities. Through these discursive devices, the media, the entertainment industry, and digital platforms shape the symbolic construction of the social world, regulating not only access to information but also the ways in which individuals internalize values, beliefs, and structures of power.

For example, cinematic narratives have played a crucial role in the construction of cultural archetypes regarding leadership, success, and authority. Through the repetition of specific narrative patterns, film and television have established standardized behavioral models that influence public perceptions of gender roles, social stratification, and power dynamics. The systematic repetition of these stories generates a naturalizing effect, whereby certain representations become internalized as unquestionable truths within the collective imagination, limiting individuals' possibilities for action and interpretation without their direct participation in the construction of such narratives.

Likewise, the media construction of public safety illustrates how narrative systems can structurally shape emotions and social reactions. Through news selection, language use, and image framing, media outlets can induce perceptions of fear, trust, or uncertainty among the population—even when citizens have not directly experienced insecurity. This process highlights the role of media narrative systems as mechanisms of emotional and political regulation, as they establish the frameworks through which threats are defined, state interventions are legitimized, and the discourse on security and social order is articulated.

Furthermore, in the digital age, social media platforms have reshaped the dynamics of media narrative systems by introducing new forms of participation and cultural discourse reproduction. However, although these platforms appear to offer a horizontal structure for content production, the algorithmic architecture that underpins them performs a regulatory function, determining which narratives gain visibility and which are marginalized. In this way, media and cultural narrative systems operate on multiple levels, structuring individuals' cognitive experience and delimiting the frameworks of meaning that shape their relationship with the world.

In summary, these narrative systems, by operating at the exosystemic level, fulfill a central role in the symbolic mediation of social experience. They not only organize the information and symbolic content that circulates in the public sphere, but also establish the coordinates from which individuals construct their interpretations of reality.

Sociocultural narrative systems

Finally, sociocultural narrative systems represent the structural manifestation of the macrosystem. These systems do not directly regulate individuals' day-to-day interactions; rather, they shape the symbolic and ideological architecture upon which smaller-scale narratives within the Cognosystem are built. They function as the normative backdrop that defines the horizon of meanings accessible to individuals within their sociocultural context, establishing the boundaries of socially constructed reality.

The macrosystem operates indirectly, yet its influence is profound and deeply structuring. Its impact is evident in the way exosystemic, mesosystemic, and microsystemic levels organize their own narratives according to prevailing norms, values, and ideological patterns. It is not a level of immediate action but rather a macro-cultural space of articulation that provides the foundation upon which institutions are legitimized, moral and legal norms—understood as macro sociocultural conventions—are established, and structuring conceptions of fundamental human rights are consolidated, among other global aspects. In this way, these narrative systems fulfill a dual function: on the one hand, they ensure the stability of the sociocultural system by maintaining foundational narratives that enable collective cohesion; on the other, they provide a framework within which new narratives can emerge, be negotiated, and reconfigured without undermining the structural continuity of the macrosystem.

A clear example of its operability can be seen in the intergenerational transmission of fundamental values such as the notion of justice, family organization, or work ethic. Although these concepts may take different forms depending on time and place, their function within the macrosystem remains the same: to provide symbolic coordinates that structure the way individuals understand their place within the social fabric. In this sense, the narrative macrosystem not only reflects culture but also sustains and regulates it, conditioning the meanings available within a society and limiting the scope of cultural change that can occur without triggering a systemic rupture.

- **Traditionalist narrative systems:**

  Traditionalist narrative systems represent the discursive structure through which societies ensure the intergenerational transmission of cultural and identity patterns, thereby consolidating a framework of historical continuity that enables the reproduction of fundamental values. These narrative systems constitute an essential pillar within the macrosystem, as they establish symbolic coordinates that regulate how communities interpret their origins, customs, and social practices. Although their primary function is the preservation of symbolic structures, these systems are neither static nor immutable; their longevity depends on their capacity to reorganize and re-signify themselves in response to historical, technological, and socioeconomic transformations in their environment.

  The inherent flexibility of these systems is evident, for example, in the evolution of family narratives. While in some traditional societies the extended family has been the predominant model—functioning as an economic and social unit of mutual support—in industrialized urban contexts, the nuclear family narrative has been promoted as the normative ideal. However, this transformation does not entail the elimination of the traditional structure, but rather its adaptation to new sociocultural circumstances. In this sense, traditionalist narratives not only preserve the past but also function as a mechanism of stabilization in the face of change, allowing the core elements of a cultural identity to remain relevant despite variations in their external form.

  Likewise, these narratives serve an integrative function within the macrosystem by legitimizing practices and beliefs that reinforce social cohesion. In communities where oral tradition has been the primary vehicle for cultural transmission, the continuity of myths, rituals, and foundational stories has enabled the structuring of collective identity over time, functioning as a reference framework that gives meaning to shared experience. However, in modernity, these same narratives have been compelled to engage with more recent discourses related to globalization, technology, and cultural diversification—highlighting the plasticity of traditionalist systems within a macrosystemic structure in constant evolution.

  From the perspective of the TCCR, traditionalist narrative systems should not be understood as mere relics of the past, but as cognosystemic devices that articulate the relationship between collective memory, cultural identity, and social adaptability. Their permanence and relevance within a macrosystem depend on their capacity to negotiate with emerging narratives, allowing them to continue functioning as fundamental frames of reference without becoming obsolete in the

face of new sociocultural configurations.

- **Moralist narrative systems:**

Moralist narrative systems constitute the axiological foundation upon which the normative coordinates of a society are established, determining what is considered right or wrong within a specific sociocultural framework. These narratives not only influence the regulation of individual and collective behavior but also legitimize the ethical framework underlying institutions, social practices, and the structuring of values. From the perspective of the TCCR, these narrative systems operate within the macrosystem as symbolic structuring devices that condition the ways in which societies construct their models of coexistence and their sense of justice.

Although moralist narratives may appear immutable, they are in fact dynamic and reconfigure over time in response to sociopolitical, economic, and technological transformations. Morality is not a static construct, but rather a discursive framework that adapts to changes in the social context, allowing societies to evolve without losing normative stability. For example, the narrative surrounding human dignity has undergone significant transformations: whereas in antiquity certain forms of slavery were morally accepted within their cultural framework, in contemporary times respect for human rights has become a widely consensual ethical pillar on a global scale. This shift has not eliminated the regulatory function of morality, but has instead reformulated the principles that sustain it in accordance with new sociocultural conditions.

One of the areas where moralist narrative systems exhibit the greatest plasticity is in the conceptualization of justice. Throughout history, different civilizations have oscillated between retributive justice models—based on proportional compensation for the harm caused—and restorative models, which prioritize reconciliation and the social reintegration of the offender. These changes are not random; they respond to the reconfiguration of values within the macrosystem. In societies where community stability is prioritized, restorative justice tends to prevail, whereas in contexts where punishment is perceived as a mechanism of social control, retributive narratives dominate. This phenomenon demonstrates that moralist systems not only reflect the culture in which they emerge but also actively structure it, defining the boundaries of what is acceptable and unacceptable at each historical moment.

From the perspective of the TCCR, the study of these systems makes it possible to understand how societies legitimize their normative frameworks and how the evolution of morality impacts the psychosocial structure of communities. While moralist narrative systems tend to generate social cohesion, they can also become sources of conflict when different narratives compete for hegemony within the macrosystem. In this sense, a society's stability does not depend solely on the permanence of its moral values, but on the capacity of its narrative structure to incorporate new perspectives without generating disruptions in cultural cohesion.

- **Normativist narrative systems:**

Normativist narrative systems configure the parameters through which a society structures and defines what is considered acceptable or unacceptable in terms of behavior, status, and social organization. These narratives are deeply rooted in the cultural structure and function as normative frameworks that guide the construction of both individual and collective identities. They regulate interactions and establish social expectations regarding participation in various areas of public and private life.

Unlike moralist systems, which focus on the axiological regulation of right and wrong, normativist narrative systems establish functional rules that organize social coexistence. These narratives not only shape the way individuals internalize their roles within the community, but also mold the perception of what is legitimate and deviant, consolidating categories of inclusion and exclusion within the sociocultural framework. In this sense, the normativist macrosystemic narrative does not merely impose models of behavior—it also configures the symbolic structure within which individuals construct their self-concept and sense of belonging.

For example, the perception of the role of work in society has been narrated in different ways throughout history. In pre-industrial societies, work was linked to the production of goods for the immediate consumption of the community and was embedded within structures of collective subsistence. In industrial capitalism, the narrative of work shifted toward economic accumulation and productive specialization, where individual effort was redefined as a criterion for personal progress and social success. In contemporary times, digitalization and automation have generated new representations of work, where flexibility and innovation have become central to the normative discourse of the labor sphere. Although the nature of work has changed, the narrative surrounding it continues to function as a normative mechanism that structures how individuals understand their role within the productive system.

Another illustrative case is the evolution of narratives about education. In traditional societies, knowledge was transmitted within closed groups and access to it was restricted to certain social strata. With the consolidation of formal education and the expansion of mass schooling, a new narrative emerged in which education shifted from being a privilege to a universal right. This normative transformation not only reconfigured access to knowledge but also established a new criterion of social value, wherein academic training became a legitimizing mechanism for social mobility and status.

From the perspective of the TCCR, the study of normativist narrative systems allows for an understanding of how societies structure their codes of interaction and how these normative frameworks not only regulate individual behavior but also define the boundaries of cultural transformation. The stability of the normative macrosystem does not lie in its rigidity, but in its ability to maintain structural coherence while integrating new norms without destabilizing the cultural fabric. In this sense, the function of the normative macrosystem is to establish a balance between continuity and change, ensuring that social evolution unfolds within parameters that preserve the cohesion and functionality of the system as a whole.

- **Juridical narrative systems:**

Finally, juridical narrative systems represent the symbolic structuring of legality, authority, and justice within a society, functioning as fundamental devices in the configuration of the macrosystem. Unlike normativist systems, which establish implicit codes of social conduct, juridical narrative systems institutionalize their narratives through formal structures that codify, interpret, and apply the law in specific contexts. Their function is not only to stabilize, but also to regulate legitimacy and the power structure within the sociopolitical framework.

These narrative systems are not static; they evolve in response to sociocultural, technological, and economic changes, allowing for the reconfiguration of the concept of justice and the reinterpretation of legal principles across different historical periods. For example, the narrative of popular sovereignty has been a fundamental foundation in the evolution of modern democratic systems. In premodern societies, political authority was narrated as an extension of divine right, where power was conceived as an unalterable transcendent mandate. With the rise of Enlightenment thought and secularization processes, a new narrative emerged in which power originates from the will of the people, thus establishing the principle of popular sovereignty as a structural axis of contemporary democracies.

Moreover, the relationship between juridical narrative systems and moralist narrative systems is key to the articulation of the macrosystem. While the former regulate behavior through formalized legal frameworks, the latter influence the social acceptance and interpretation of laws. For instance, in different societies, the narrative surrounding the death penalty has fluctuated between its legitimization as a mechanism of retributive justice and its rejection based on human rights principles. This phenomenon demonstrates how juridical systems must maintain coherence with the dominant moralist systems within the macrosystem, adjusting their narratives to preserve the cultural and political stability of a society.

From the perspective of the TCCR, the analysis of juridical narrative systems reveals that law is not merely a normative construct, but a narrative framework that defines the boundaries of what is legal, legitimate, and socially acceptable. In this sense, the stability of the juridical macrosystem does not lie in the rigidity of its rules, but in its ability to reinterpret itself without losing its role as a regulator of social coexistence. Its evolution is determined by its interaction with other narrative systems within the macrosystem, ensuring its relevance and applicability in constantly changing sociocultural contexts.

General conclusion of the classification

The present classification proposal of narrative systems within the Cognosystem, framed by the *Cognosystemic Theory of Human Psychosocial Relational Construction* (TCCR), is conceived as a fundamental theoretical development for a more comprehensive understanding of the structuring and operability of meaning in human experience, according to this psychosocial theory. Far from being a rigid categorization, this classification is understood as a flexible heuristic model that enables the dissection of narrative system dynamics across multiple levels of complexity—ranging from the construction of individual identity to the formation of sociocultural macrostructures. This model not only provides an analytical framework for studying narrative as an organizing construct of psychosocial reality, but also facilitates an understanding of how subjects, through their discursive agency, negotiate, reconfigure, and recontextualize the narrative frameworks that constitute them and within which they operate.

It is important to remember that, from a cognosystemic perspective, narrative systems do not exist in isolation but operate within an interdependent ecology where interaction, feedback, and transformation are fundamental elements. The coexistence of intrapersonal, ideological, chronological, interpersonal, organizational, and sociocultural narratives demonstrates the plasticity and depth of narrative structures, which articulate subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and the construction of collectivity. In this sense, narrative emerges not only as a device for psychic and social structuring, but also as a mechanism for the regulation and production of meaning that enables individuals to provide continuity, coherence, and functionality to their experience within an ever-changing environment.

One of the fundamental contributions of this classification lies in its applicability both in the academic field and in professional practice. By establishing a robust conceptual framework, it facilitates the systematization of the study of human narratives and opens new possibilities for the design of modeling and discursive re-signification strategies in contexts of social transformation. This capacity for intervention is not limited to the field of social sciences but extends to interdisciplinary spaces such as education, politics, mental health, and communication, where the analysis and reconfiguration of narrative systems can significantly influence the construction of more adaptive and functional subjectivities.

This proposal also invites reflection on the inherently dynamic nature of the Cognosystem. The constant interaction between different narrative levels generates frictions, displacements, and recompositions that not only enable the adaptation of individuals and collectives but also reveal the structuring role of narrative in regulating social change. In this sense, narrative plasticity emerges as a central element of psychosocial resilience, allowing subjects to reformulate their interpretive frameworks without losing the structural coherence of their identity. This flexibility not only facilitates adaptation to new scenarios but also enables the emergence of alternative narratives capable of challenging and transforming established discursive configurations, thereby fostering greater inclusion and diversification within the social and cultural fabric.

Finally, the classification of narrative systems in the TCCR is not only an analytical tool for understanding the construction of meaning in human experience, but also lays the

groundwork for the development of new lines of research and applied methodologies. Exploring the interactions between different narrative systems opens a fertile space for designing analytical and intervention strategies aimed at fostering more adaptive, sustainable, and functional psychosocial dynamics over time. In this sense, the theory not only reaffirms the central role of narrative in shaping psychosocial reality, but also emphasizes the importance of its study within the social and human sciences. Moreover, its application can contribute to the development of innovative methodologies in public policy design, strategic planning, and conflict resolution, thereby consolidating narrative as a fundamental tool for understanding, managing, and transforming contemporary social reality.

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